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*and the*  
SWORD



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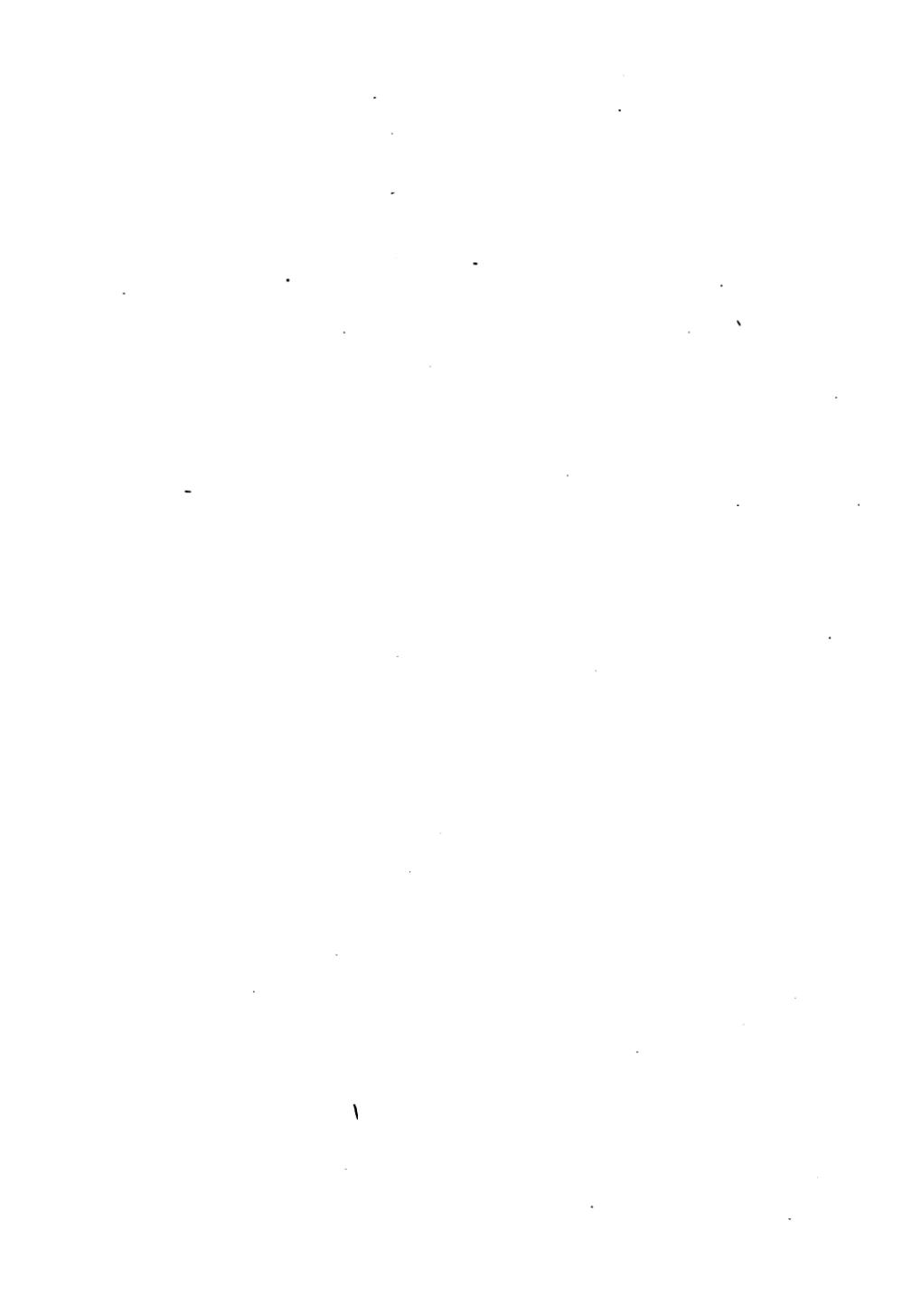
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## **THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE SWORD**



# THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE SWORD

and Other Stories

BY  
FLORA CLARKE HUNTINGTON



NEW YORK

AUTHORS & PUBLISHERS CORPORATION  
4th Avenue & 30th Street

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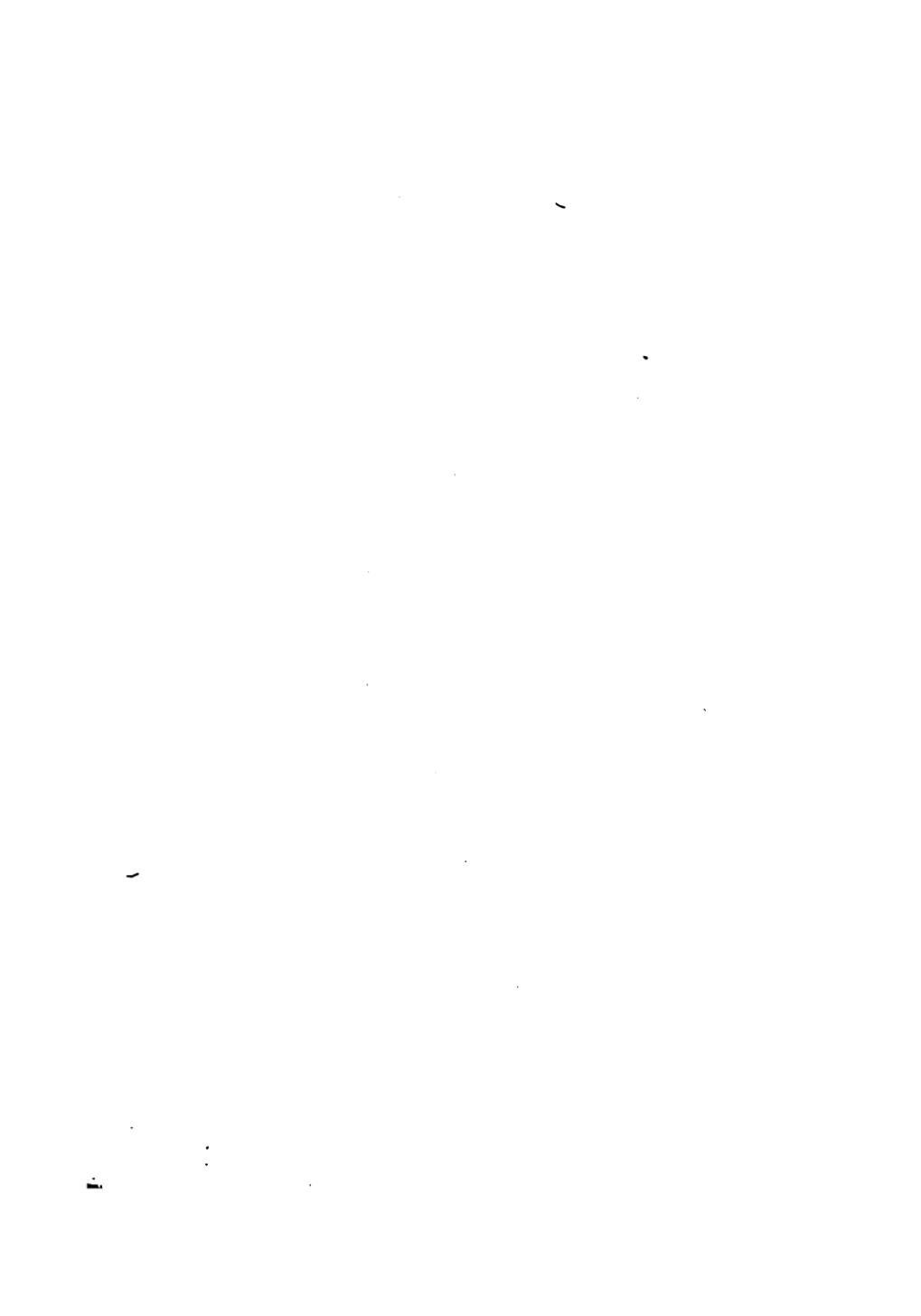
**MY GRANDCHILDREN**

BIEB 19 FEB '36



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## THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE SWORD

DUTY calls you, Boggan, and being a true son of your mother and of your country, you will go to the war,—you must go; I would not have it otherwise. Yet it almost breaks my heart," cried Rose Braxton, stifling a sob as she clung to her brother's arm.

"Hush, hush, little sister," he answered laughingly, feigning a gayety he did not feel; "we must not think of the separation, but let our thoughts dwell upon the home-coming,—when we shall be so happy together again. The time will be short, Rose; only a hundred days, or a little more, and we will have whipped the Yankees and saved our homes."

"But even that will be long, with you away, Boggan," Rose replied, sighing; "and—and—suppose you never came back."

"Don't speak of death!" protested the brother, kissing the girl's upturned face. "We are too young to talk of dying, little sister; life is before us full of promise. Who knows?" he continued, "I may not only live to return, but come crowned with victory and honor. But if God wills that I should fall, then I'll die like a man, fighting for my country, home, and mother."

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Patrick Boggan Braxton was named for his grandfather of Revolutionary fame, and was in more than name the counterpart of his illustrious ancestor. A mere boy, slight in form as a girl, he was possessed of a most fearless spirit. Tender as a woman, he was yet full of patriotic fire, and believing in the cause of his beloved Southland, he was ready to sacrifice all upon her altar.

It was the morning of a lovely June day when he left home, and the negroes had gathered in front of their whitewashed cabins to discuss "Marse Boggan's gwine ter de wah."

"How I shall miss dat chile!" declared Mammy Chloe, wiping her eyes with a bright-colored bandanna. "I tuk him frum his mudder de hour he wuz born, an' nussed him tell he cou'd wa'k ev'ywhar by hisself." And she wept copiously at the thought of Boggan's going.

On the steps leading from the cabins to their own gardens, where stood the "old well" by which they did their washing, was Uncle Isaiah "the preacher," with Uncle Ephraim, Lena, and other servants.

"Sistahs an' Bredrun," said Isaiah, turning to the others, "le's go down by de pah tree an' ax Gawd ter go wid Marse Boggan ter de Army."

"Amen," responded John, while Lena chimed in: "Dat's whut we'll sho do dis minit," as all the others followed him like children, in their simple faith, to the place where they often held religious meetings,—all, that is, except Mary, the only educated negro among them. Mary's husband, John, was a North Carolina darky, black as the ace of spades, while

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she was bright in color and his superior in many ways, and, having married "beneath herself," had "no use fur pore whi'e trash, much less fur common niggers." Mary had hailed from Virginia, and being quite proud of the fact, would not associate with the negroes on the plantation. So when Uncle Isaiah called for "sarvice by de pah tree," Mary, who never joined the others either in dance br prayer, went into her house and closed the door.

"Belubed Bredrun an' Sistahs," said Uncle Isaiah, "we am'sembled hyar not ter preach er sarmon long or short, but coz I tole yer ter ax A'mighty Fadder ter presarve Marse Boggan frum de en'my." Then, raising his eyes and hands to Heaven, he began: "O Lawd, we ax Dee ter tuk Marse Boggan un'er de shadow ob Dy wing, fur he am er mighty good chile, an' sho'an'sartin, ole Miss ain' gwine ter lib ef he doan cum back. An' whin Marster stan's wid his face ter de foe, stan' wid him, O Lawd, an' keep de bullets erway. But ef it's Dy will he should die fur his kentry, he'p him ter be brave ter de las', O Lawd, an' go wid him' cross de ribber ter de lan' ob Canaan. In dis hyar wah twixt de Norf an' Souf lead him erlong de right track es Dou led de chil'runc ob Is'rul frum de wil'erness. In de jedgment day, we'll all be gaddered tergedder, de sheep on de right han', de goats on de lef'. An', O Lawd, who ob us feller Chris'-uns hes got ile in our vessels? Is our lamps trimme' an' burnin' fur de bridegroom whim he cums? O Lawd, doan' let us be i'le in your vineyard, but let us wuk fur de glory er shinin' up yunder. He'p us ter keep out de road ole Satin trables, an' ter wa'k in de narrow

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way, ter de gre't whi'e throne, whar de Marster rules us all. Gawd bless Ole Miss, an' all de fo'ks on de plantashun. Tek kere ob us, O Lawd, in dis hyar trouble, an' go wid Marse Boggan an' de Rebels ter de en' ob de wurl. Gawd bless dese few pore words, an' sabe us, O Lawd, fo' Christ's sake, Amen."

Lena's clear voice then broke into song:

"Ise gwine ter cross de ribber Jordan,  
Cum erlong, cum erlong!  
An'tek mystand'by His right han'  
Cum erlong sinners, cum rlong."

The negroes joined in the melody and were still singing when suddenly across the summer air came a gentle voice, calling:

"Ephraim! O Ephraim!"

"Yes'm, I'se ercumin'," answered Eph. "It's Ole Miss," said he to his companions, "an'sho an'sartin yer kno'why she's ercallin'? Time's up fur Marse Boggan ter be leavin', an'ef yer wants ter tell him good-bye yer'd better cum ter de house."

Mrs. Braxton, who had been some time with her boy, arranging those little things that only mothers know how to do, came out among the negroes as they gathered in groups on the front lawn, that they might see how brave she could be,—how cheerfully, nay gladly, she bade her son farewell and Godspeed in defense of his country.

The house was a large, square, two-story frame building, with verandas above and below supported by massive pillars, built in the style of antebellum days. And when the broad doors of that fine old Southern home opened, and Boggan, with his firm

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young face and trim figure, stepped out upon the porch, the cries of the slaves could be heard:

"Thar's Marse Boggan, thar he is! riddy an'wil-lin'ter fight. Gawd bless him an' save him ter cum back ter us."

As they pressed about him Mrs. Braxton called Ephraim to her.

"Are you ready to go with your young master?" she asked.

"Riddy, Mistess? Yes'm, eb'ry inch ob me," Eph replied.

"Then, promise me, Eph, that you will watch over him—and—if—if—anything should happen, you will bring him home to me."

"Fore Gawd, I promise, Mistess."

A few moments later Mrs. Braxton stood watching her boy and Ephraim as they went together down the long white road. When she could see them no longer, she turned to go into the house.

"Wal, Mistess," said Mammy Chloe, "Ise glad yer stopped er lookin'et las'. Kase, Mistess, hit'll brung bad luck ter watch enybody out'n sight."

"Hush, Chloe, this is no time for superstition. My boy is in the hands of his Maker, and He alone knows what will be the outcome."

"Mebby so, mebby so, Ole Miss," muttered old Chloe, "but jes'wait an'see ef dat ole sayin'doan cum close ter de truf."

Late one gloomy afternoon, one year later, Mrs. Braxton was alone in her room, thinking of Boggan and wondering at his long silence. Going presently to the window that overlooked the long white road,

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she saw a group of Federal soldiers approaching the house, and dropping upon her knees, asked God for strength to bear whatever might come.

Soon the men entered and began their search through the house, even penetrating her own sanctum. One man, more wicked than the others, seeing her in prayer, laughed and said:

"You old Sesesh, you need not look for that damned son of yours. He has been shot,—and gone to hell, where he ought to have been some time ago."

Mrs. Braxton arose, and with folded arms, said calmly :

"If he is dead, then I wish I had ten sons to die as did he in defense of his country."

The Captain, surprised at his men, and with admiration for the plucky Southern woman, bade the soldiers take their departure and leave her alone in her grief.

Going again to the window, Mrs. Braxton gazed earnestly at the row of cedars, straining her eyes for a glimpse of Boggan's boyish form running toward the house. But look as she would there was no sight of him she loved.

"O God," she moaned, "can he be dead?"

Feeling a touch upon her shoulder, she turned. Ephraim was looking sadly at her.

"O Eph, Eph," she cried, "where is my boy?"

"Ther las'time I seed him, Mistess, he wuz er fightin' in de front, et de battle ob Murfusboro; an'arter de fight wuz ober I—"

"But your promise, Eph?"

"Mistess," and a lump came into Ephraim's throat,

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"I tried, I did,—fore Gawd, Mistess, I tried ter brung Marse Boggan home, but I couldn' fine his body enywhar, so I jes' hed ter leab him. But I brung yer dis sword, dat Marster gib me jes' afore de battle, an' said: 'Eph, ef-ef—anything happens ter me, tek dis ter Mudder.' It's mighty hard ter tell yer, Mistess, but I reckon I mus',—kase Marster wanted yer ter kno'it. Wal, it happen jes' dis way. It wuz et de battle ob Belmont dat Marse Boggan wuz skirmishin'roun'behin'de army whin he cum er-cross de bigges', fines'lookin'Yankee Colonel. Den Marse Boggan tole de Colonel ter s'render. But de Colonel swore he wouldn't. An' he poked er lot ob fun et Marster, an'called him er 'chit ob er boy.' Den Marse Boggan tole him ergain ter s'render. But de Colonel jes' laughed, an' said, 'S'render ter yer, yer little striplin', why, I ken ride ober yer.' 'S'render,' t'underder Marster. 'Neber,' yelled de Colonel. Den, pullin'his sword, de Colonel jumped frum his hoss, an' he was sich er pow'ful man I made sho he'd kill Marse Boggan. But quicker'n yer'd wink yer eye, Marster got so close ter him an'fired dat he sot his close on fire."

Mrs. Braxton shuddered.

"Wait, Mistess, till I tells yer all: Marse Boggan didn't wan'er kill him. Jes' ez soon ez de Colonel fell, Marster wuz by his side, doin'whut he could fur him. He tuk his own han'schief an'boun'de Colonel's wound. 'Eph,' he said 'de Colonel wuz too fine er man ter kill. An'Gawd furgive me, kase I didn't mean ter do it.'"

"Indeed I shall prize the sword, Ephraim, as a

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last token from my boy," replied Mrs. Braxton. "But leave me now, I want to be alone."

"Ole Miss, whin de wah is ober,—eben ef dey free us,—I wants ter stay wid yer till dis pore body gwine ter de grave."

"You shall stay as long as you live, Ephraim," replied Mrs. Braxton, pressing the faithful negro's hand, "you were Boggan's servant, and I need you now, more than ever."

"Gawd bless yer, Mist'ess," said Ephraim, as he reached the door; then, looking back, he almost whispered: "Doan cry no more,—Marse Boggan's er waitin' fur yer up yunder."

This was too much for the grief-stricken mother, who sobbed aloud in her sorrow. How long she remained alone after the faithful servant's departure she knew not, but she soon was conscious of some one in the room. Then a pair of arms slipped lovingly about her waist, a tear-stained face was pressed close to hers, and a voice cried:

"I know, Mother, Boggan has gone,—Eph has told us all."

And Rose dropped her head into her Mother's lap, sobbing convulsively. When the storm had spent itself, she raised her head.

"Mother," she said, "Boggan gave his life for us, and we must trust to Him who does all things well."

Thus mother and daughter sat, mingling their tears, until Mrs. Braxton thought of the sword. Taking it up reverently she said:

"My daughter—this beautiful sword, traced with

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letters of grayish gold, Boggan captured before his death, and sent to me. I now give it to you, and ask that you keep it always in memory of him."

"Hyar, yer nigger, wher yo w'istlin' lak yo is? Doan yo'knowed er w'istlin' 'oman an' er crowin'hin, niver do cum ter no good en'. Hyar yer is er-singin' an' playin' de liblong day, while I hes no en' ob wuk. But I knowed whut's de matter wid yer. It's kase ole Miss goan gib yer ter Miss Rose ter be—whut yer cull it?"

"Waitin'maid, yer stupid," returned Sloan, with a scornful toss of her kinky head. Then, breaking into song: "Way down South in Dixie, look away, look away," she executed a few intricate steps in an old-fashioned breakdown.

"Dat's whut meks yer put on sich er heaps ob a'rs, an' t'inks yer's good es eny ob de w'ite folks, kase all yer got ter do es ter fix young Mist'ess ha'r, put on her shoes an'stockin's in de mornin's, en whin she goes er visitin' he'p her dress es fine es eny lady ob de lan'. Dat's yer idee ob wuk, yer woolly-headed gal! Oh! go way, Sloan,—yer's so spilt now yer've no more sense den er fishin'worm."

"Shet up, yer shaller-headed, squint-eyed niggah! Yer doan knowed whut yer talkin' 'bout. I'se longed ter Miss Rose eber sence befo'I wuz born. Dat's er fac',—kase ole Mammy Chloe said dat my Mammy's fust chile,—dat's me,—wuz ter 'long ter Miss Rose. I'se de ol'es' ob fourteen, Mose; dat's why I'se s'lected fur de place ob honor. En' jes' wait tell Miss Rose eddictates me, den I'll tek de shine off'n Mose, sho nouf."

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"Eddicates yer, de mischief! Wall, I'll bet my Sunday-go-ter-meetin' hat dat ef de Yanks wuz ter cum ergin yer'd not wait ter be eddicated—"

"Why, Mose?"

"Kase yer'd run."

"Run whar, niggah?"

"Run erway wid dem, ob course," laughed Mose, rolling up his black eyes until only the whites of them could be seen.

"To be free!" screamed Sloan in great dismay. "I tole yer, Mose, yer did'n knowed whut yer talkin' 'bout. Yer t'ink I'd leab Miss Rose fur dem'blue-coats'whut cum down hyar ter run dis kentry, an'es'er-tekin' all dat 'longs ter Ole Miss? No, sah! I won't leab Miss Rose, er eny ob 'em, fur all de Yanks, er de Kings, er de Queens, in de worl'. No, sah; I'se jes'es free now es I wan'er be. An' let 'em tech me ef dey dare!"

And Sloan's black eyes flashed angrily at the very thought. But the words had scarcely left her lips when a cloud of dust was seen in the distance, and the *tramp, tramp* of many feet brought the Yankees once again to the Braxton home.

Moses was the first to see them.

"Run, Sloan, run!" he cried, as he took to his heels in great haste for the cabins. Sloan stood looking at him a moment, her warm heart beating with disgust, but as the enemy was rapidly approaching the house, she went to give the alarm.

As Sloan burst upon the Braxtons with the cry: "The Yanks er cumin'!" each face paled, and each heart sent up a silent prayer for protection.

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"Rose," said Mrs. Ward, Rose's grandmother, who was sitting by the window, knitting; "leave the soldiers to me. I'm old, it's true, but perhaps they will listen to me."

Soon the soldiers entered the house, and began the destruction of everything in sight. Mrs. Ward followed them from room to room, and begged that they might save something.

"Oh, sirs", she cried. "do leave something for us to lie upon!"

But they heeded not, and soon raided a chest, where Mrs. Braxton had hidden valuable silver and jewels that had been in the family for many years. Thinking to touch their hearts, she made one last appeal:

"Did you have a mother?" she said to the nearest man.

"No," he replied. "I was raised by a damned old grandmother, and I've hated women ever since."

One of the men noticed Sloan near her Mistress. She was a neat young negress, with bright black eyes and teeth like rows of pearl, while her form was slight but well made. Going to her the soldier said:

"See here, girl, don't you want to be free?"

"No, sah, I don't," returned Sloan defiantly.

"Don't want to be free for all your life?" he cried in astonishment.

"Didn't I tolle yer 'no', sah? Wal, I meant it."

And Sloan's eyes sparkled with anger. The man's brow darkened, as, going closer to her, he whispered something in her ear. But the defiant face only

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revealed a persistent stubborn refusal. Her conduct finally so infuriated him that he turned to his comrades.

"Let us take that girl by force," he angrily exclaimed.

"By all means! She is our prisoner," the men cried in one voice, as they surrounded Sloan. But, quick as they were, before they seized her, Rose rushed between them, her face flaming with indignation.

"Let that girl alone," she cried, "she belongs to me."

"I beg your pardon, miss, she belongs to us," they answered insolently.

Suddenly Sloan gained control of her arms, and throwing them about Rose's neck, cried:

"Fore Gawd, Mist'ess, doan let 'em tek me."

"I would save you if I could, Sloan," sobbed Rose; "but these men are going to take you, and make you free. Live as Miss Rose has taught you, and we may some day meet again."

The soldiers then dragged Sloan from her Mistress' arms, but she clung so closely, that she left the imprints of her fingers deep in Rose Braxton's neck. Shortly afterward Rose, through her tears, saw the Federal marauders drive past the house, with Sloan a captive in the Braxton carriage, with its quaint old mirror, "my lady's puff box," and the family coat of arms emblazoned upon its sides.

It was the latter part of November, several years after peace had been declared, that Rose Braxton took a position as governess in a city in Illinois.

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Work was then foreign to the daughters of the South, and many homes were opened to her, but she refused to be a dependent. She reached her destination in the afternoon of a bright autumn day, and found a carriage waiting. The driver, stepping up to her, asked: "Be you Miss Braxton, who's going to Mrs. Herbert's, at Herbert Place?"

"That is my name," returned Rose, as she entered the carriage and was driven into the suburbs to the home of Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Herbert,—a palatial residence standing on the brow of a wide rolling hill, with beautiful grounds, broad driveways, and fine trees which were thickly covered with many-colored autumn leaves.

When Rose arrived she was made to feel at home as soon as she had met her charming employer, the mistress of Herbert Place. At dinner she met the members of the family, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Herbert, Edith and Mary (their two little girls, of whom Rose was to take charge) and Colonel George Herbert, Mr. Herbert's bachelor brother.

When the meal was about half finished, in the midst of gay laughter and repartee, Rose caught the large dark eyes of Colonel Herbert full upon her. She had been giving a quaint account of her journey, and his earnest gaze somewhat embarrassed her, although she thought, with a pretty blush: "What a fine looking man he is, and how commanding his figure!" And the Colonel was saying inwardly: "Truly she is a daughter of the South, whose brightness and charm of manner have won me at first sight."

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But Rose received Colonel Herbert's attentions indifferently that evening, and for several evenings afterward when they met in the drawing-room after dinner. "True," she thought, "I'm of the best blood of the South and have known better days; but I'm poor now, and only a governess, while Colonel Herbert is not only a Northern man, whose sympathies and views are different from mine, but he is a man of wealth and social position, who cannot possibly have any interest in me. He should smile upon women in his own sphere."

But her indifference only spurred the Colonel on. He believed in the old adage: "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady"; and as he was not only a persistent but a very prepossessing man, Rose gradually relented and received him more graciously, even consenting to his joining herself and the girls sometimes on the lawn after school hours. The Colonel lost no time in taking advantage of this opportunity. As he was very fond of his nieces, he made five o'clock a convenient hour to be at home as often in the week as possible.

And so the weeks passed, Edith and Mary being Rose's devoted pupils, and the Colonel hourly more in love with her, until the romps after school ended in long walks over green fields and through leafy lanes, sometimes accompanied by the two little girls, but more often without them.

The autumn went swiftly, and the short winter days soon passed into months, and each month endeared Rose to the members of the household, her time being divided between school duties and pleasure,

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until spring was ushered in in all its glorious beauty. The trees had put on their fresh new leaves, and all nature seemed young and glad, when one afternoon Colonel Herbert and Rose went on a ramble through the sweet-scented woods. The early flowers were blossoming, and sweet-voiced songsters were trilling lays of love to their mates as they seated themselves on an old moss-covered tree trunk.

The birds sang louder, and the silence between the man and girl grew so unbearable that the Colonel could endure it no longer and made a confession of his love, telling the "old, old story, which is ever new," over again.

"Rose, I love you," he said, while the birds echoed the refrain in the tree-tops overhead.

Rose trembled, and for a moment was silent, then, looking up, asked:

"Colonel Herbert, can you love a rebel, a little Secesh? You know,—you who wore the blue."

"How dare you ask me such a question, Rose,—I thought you knew me better!" cried Herbert. "That war, sad as it was, is a thing of the past; and let the dead past bury its dead. Our country is united now, and I love you,—how can I help it? I love you, as then I fought against you, with all the passion of my soul. But hear me, if I lived again in those dark and dreadful days, and met you,—I would love you still,—because God intends us for each other."

"Oh, don't, don't, Colonel Herbert," returned Rose, covering her eyes with her hands. "You bring the past so vividly before me, and, and," she almost

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sobbed, "I thought I would hate a Yankee, but I don't."

"Of course, you don't, Rose,—you love me," cried the Colonel, drawing her within his arms and smothering her lips with kisses. "And I want you for my own little wife."

"Not just now, Colonel," said Rose, pushing away from him. "I must have time to think, you know; I must think over it, while you," and she smiled through her tears, "must wait patiently for my answer."

"And I agree to wait—Rose, a short time, if my little sweetheart, my Southern flower, will—she must be mine."

Just after luncheon a few days later Rose was lounging lazily in the hammock on the front portico, with Colonel Herbert seated near her, talking of the late war.

"Rose," he said, "I have a collection of sketches which I would like to show you." And going to his room, he soon returned, and together they looked over the portfolio.

Presently the Colonel came across a large white silk handkerchief, which he laid upon his knee. Rose was absorbed in the sketches, but when she saw the handkerchief her face became suddenly pale, and she sprang from the hammock and with outstretched hands exclaimed:

"Colonel Herbert, do let me see that handkerchief."

Her companion, startled by her manner, handed it to her, and watched her as she examined it carefully, particularly the embroidered initials in one corner. Slowly and distinctly she said aloud:

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"P. B. B." Then, with a gasp: "Oh Colonel, those initials are—"

"Whose, Rose?"

"My brother's." Her words came almost in a whisper.

"Your brother's!" cried the Colonel, infinite pain and surprise marked upon his features.

"Yes, yes," she went on, while her voice was choked with sobs; "I knew the handkerchief at once, for I had embroidered the letters on it myself, and gave it to Boggan just before he left home. Tell me, Colonel, where and how it came into your possession."

Colonel Herbert seated her gently in the hammock and took his place by her side. "That handkerchief, Rose," he said, "saved my life, and if you care to hear the story—"

"Yes! yes!" cried Rose.

"Well, it was at the Battle of Belmont that I was met by a mere boy, scarcely old enough to bear arms, with whom I had some words, and to whom I would not surrender. I drew my sword, threatening to kill him, when he fired, inflicting upon me a serious injury. I fell fainting from loss of blood, and when I came to myself I found this handkerchief bound so closely over the wound that it had stopped bleeding. He, supposing me dead, left me upon the field. But God willed otherwise, Rose. I was found by my own men and nursed back to life. But Rose, dear, you are weeping?"

"Yes, Colonel, for I know it was my brother who shot you—I remember it all now,—Eph, his body-

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servant, was with him at the time. And how I wish Boggan could have known before his death that you were living, for although you were his enemy, he regretted the occurrence so much."

"Then, he is dead?" returned the Colonel sadly. "I have often wondered who he was, and what became of him."

"He was killed at the battle of Murfreesboro, but we never recovered his body. Nor do I know how or where he is buried. Colonel Herbert," continued Rose, glancing up at him through eyes wet with tears, "how strangely things have come about, and how little we know where God will lead us! I must leave you a moment,—for I have something that you will prize as much as the handkerchief,—something of great value to you," she said, as she vanished into the house, leaving him alone in the shadow of the portico.

Soon Rose returned, and going to the Colonel, gave him the sword her mother had given her. At first Colonel Herbert could scarcely believe his own eyes. Then,

"My sword!" he cried, visibly affected as he took it from her, "that I thought was lost forever."

Noticing a card tied with ribbon to the hilt, he read aloud these words:

"T'was on that dread immortal day,  
I met the federal band,  
The Colonel drew his sword on me,  
And I tore it from his hand."

The Colonel's voice and eyes were full of tears, as putting his arms about the girl, he said:

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"Rose, the sword and handkerchief are fitting emblems of the North and South reunited: the sword the North fighting for the Union; the handkerchief the South, stained with the blood of men who fought valiantly for a lost cause, that they believed to be right. They were foes then, brother against brother, but united now, as we are, lovers, brought together after years of hardship and suffering. And, Rose, this handkerchief shall bind our hearts for life, as it bound the hole the bullet made in my side. And, Rose my love, give me my answer," pleaded the Colonel, lifting her face to his. "Is there not a greater bond between us now?"

"Yes; besides,—I have loved you all along."

"God bless you, Rose!"

"And I've decided," she continued, letting her brown head rest upon his shoulder.

"What, Rose?"

"That there shall be a blending of the blue and the gray in our love, for I'm going to be the wife of a Yankee Colonel," which answer so pleased Colonel Herbert that he kissed her laughing lips and insisted that the wedding preparations should be begun at once.

Only a few weeks intervened now before the wedding, which Rose, after consultation with the other members of the family, decided should take place in her adopted home, and should be a very quiet affair. Late one afternoon, after a hard day's work, in which Mrs. Lewis Herbert had assisted her in the many necessary details of a young woman's trousseau, that charming matron, who already loved Rose as a sister,

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suggested that she should take a drive with her after dinner.

It was sundown when they passed the great gates, through the shady country road, and turned into the public thoroughfare leading to the city. They were riding slowly along, talking of the "coming event" as only women who are interested in such matters can talk, when Rose expressed a wish for a drink of water. They were passing a cottage at the time, and Mrs. Herbert said:

"There seems a nice place, Rose, on the other side of the road; suppose we stop and ask."

The carriage came to standstill, while Rose alighted and went to the door of the cottage and knocked. The summons brought a neat-looking colored woman, at whom Rose stood staring, as it was so unusual to find a negro in that part of the country.

"Will yo' cum in?" said the woman.

"No, thank you," returned Rose, "I came for a drink of water; will you kindly bring it to me while my carriage waits at the gate?"

"Certa'nly, mam," replied the woman respectfully; "I'll get it with pleasure." Then she bowed and left Rose standing in the half-open door. "Ain't she purty?" she muttered to herself; "an'how much like de ole times et es ter hear her talk." She soon reappeared, bearing a tray with a glass of cool water. Rose drank with a relish, thanked the woman, and then something bade her speak with her.

"It is strange you are living North," she said. "I seldom see colored people here?"

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"I cum fum de Souf," said the woman, "but I hev lived here er long wile."

"From what part of the South were you?" asked Rose.

"Fum wes' Tennysee."

"To what family did you belong, my good woman?"

"Ter dé Braxt'ns," the woman replied.

"And your name?" cried Rose.

"Sloan Abernathy."

"Sloan! Sloan!" again she cried. "Don't you know me?"

Sloan fastened her eyes full upon Rose's face, then a flash of recognition, a wild prolonged cry, and Sloan fell once more upon Rose's neck, and wept so loud that it brought Mrs. Lewis Herbert to the house. To her consternation Rose was embracing a colored woman, but Rose soon freed herself from Sloan, who kept repeating:

"Wal, on my wud, ef et ain' Miss Rose,—my deah young Mist'ess!"

Rose explained the situation to Mrs. Herbert, who, of course, was delighted that Rose had found her old servant. Soon they told Sloan of Rose's approaching marriage, and of her intention to live South. But nothing would satisfy Sloan, now that she had found Miss Rose, until promised that she should go with them.

"Deed, I'll be glad ter go back ter de ole home, Miss Rose; my husban' es dade, an' I've nuthin' ter keep me heah. I'd went Souf long sence, but he'rd de fambly wuz all dade. But now dat yo',—de on'y

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one lef',—am goin' dere, den I'll go wid yo' an' stay  
es long es yo 'll hab me."

"And that will be always, Sloan."

It was a pleasant day the following fall, after an extended bridal trip through the North and East, that Colonel Herbert, Rose, and Sloan reached the South, and once again entered the old home, which Colonel Herbert had bought as a surprise for Rose. Several of the servants, hearing that she would take charge again, returned to the place and awaited her coming, with cheerful hearts and doors wide open to receive her. The smoke and din of battle were past; traffic was plying between the sister States; the flag of the Confederacy had been folded away by loving hands, while the Stars and Stripes waved gloriously over a common country,—its once broken parts cemented by ties of blood.

The handkerchief and sword are handled reverently to-day by a younger generation in the Braxton home, which once more became one of the hospitable mansions of the South.

# THE CHÂTELAINE OF HOLDEN LODGE

Birds were calling and answering from tree to tree, and the fresh, sweet smell of shrub and flower told of full-throated springtime, as a stranger stood lost in thought, reading an inscription upon a Confederate monument. Suddenly he heard a sob, and turning, saw an old darky whose frame shook with emotion, as he worked over a nearby grave.

"What can I do for you?" asked the stranger, joining the negro.

"Nothin', sah."

"What is your name?"

"Tom, sah. Jes' plain Tom, attar Marse Tom Weathford."

The stranger whistled under his breath.

"You loved your Master, Tom?"

"Dis nigger ain' nuver had er frien' lak him!"

"And this—"

"Is his grave, sah, unner de shadow ob de monumint whar he's been lyin ever since dat bullet tuk him at Gettysburg; an' I'se been keepin' hit green bofe summer an' winter."

The stranger, lifting his hat, looked upon the tall white shaft, where a Confederate officer with a group of his men was carved in lifelike relief upon the marble.

"I—I understand, Tom. You can never forget."

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"No, sah! Tom doan' nuver forgit! Somus in de daid ob night, I come hyer ter ta'k ter Marse Tom. He allus understood me. Atter all de years he's been in Heaven,—I come out hyer, an' tells him 'bout Miss Mary an' de fambly—"

"Miss Mary?"

"Yes, sah. Does yo' know her, sah?"

Something in the stranger's startled utterance of the name had caught the keen ear of old Tom.

"I—I once knew some people here before the war. I knew a Major,"—he snapped his finger as if trying to remember,—“Major Le—”

"Leroy, sah. Dat he,—dat sho' he."

"I suppose he's dead, too?"

"Daid, sah,—did yo' say 'daid'?" Tom gazed in open-mouthed astonishment. "Yo' sho' must be er new comer in dese hyer parts. De Major wuz as lively as er cricket dis mornin' when Ike saddled de ole sorrel for him ter ride ter town."

"Does the—the Major take to the new order, Tom?"

"Oh, yas, sah. He's tuk ter de new order jes' lak he takes eb'rythin' else in sight, as he allus did."

"He has plenty of money, I suppose?"

"Oh, yas, sah. He's made er lot ob money out ob dis hyer freedom, whar eb'rybody done lost. Humph! he sho' lives on de best ob dis hyer kintry. An' whuts more, Marster, if yo' gwine ter git erhead ob him, yo' sho' got ter git up moughthy early in de mornin'."

"Is—is he married, Tom?"

"Marrhied! Lawdy, dat beats me! Yaw, yaw, yaw! De Major marrhied!" Tom, convulsed with laughter, dropped his spade and hung to the nearest tree to

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steady himself. "Mostly when de wimmin fo'ks thinks dey's got him, he's up an' gone quicker 'n er jackrabbit, but," and Tom became serious again, "de w'ite fo'ks do say, atter all dis time in de single harness, dat he sho' gwine ter marrhy—"

"Who?" demanded the stranger.

"De Widder Holden, sah."

The stranger forgot to answer, forgot Tom's very existence as he abruptly turned away and walked toward an eminence, where he stopped and looked down upon the valley. Below, shimmering in the sunlight nestled the quaint little village of Sunnybrook, once rich in fine growth of timber, waving fields of grain, and beautiful antebellum homes, with tall oaks and wide-spreading lawns. But ruin stalks in the wake of war, and Sunnybrook had borne her share of devastation and suffering, but to him every tree, every flower, was an old-time friend. In the distance he could see the curl of smoke coming from the kitchen chimney of his old home nestling under the silver maples, and he knew,—if Mary were still there,—that the picture of his mother hung in the same place over the mantel.

Pulling his coat collar high about his neck, lest some one recognize him, the stranger made his way past the graves of the village dead out into the open road and down the hill to the village. As he walked, deep in thought, a touch recalled him:

"I say, Marster," said Tom, who, not understanding, had followed that he might be of some assistance, "we's er-comin' ter de Major's, an'—an' if yo'want ter see him, yo' better come in an' res' yo'se'f."

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"I don't care to see the Major now. Tom, can I trust you?"

"Marse Tom allus did, sah."

"Then I know that I can. Tom, say nothing to your mistress, or to any one, of the stranger who spoke to you to-day."

"Not one word will Tom say, sah."

And as he took the old negro's hand in his own, the stranger knew that Tom would keep his word even to his death.

The sun was falling behind the massive gate of Holden Lodge, when Maggie Holden pulled up the library shade and gazed out upon the green, velvety lawn. In the soft Southern wind, old-fashioned pinks, johnnie - jump - ups, forget - me - nots, coxcombs, and margarites, nodded their pretty heads, and wondered (if flowers can wonder) what their lovely mistress was doing in the house on such a wonderful day. Tall and supple, with grayish blue eyes, which at times were almost black, and a wide, smooth brow on which a frown was seldom seen, she was the most attractive widow of Sunnybrook, and boasted more suitors than one. And that one was the problem that was worrying her now. Strange at that moment she lifted her eyes to the hills, then toward the cemetery, and thought of the romance of her young life,—long before she had married Squire Holden, a well-to-do man of that period.

The doorknob turned, and her old friend, Mary Weatherford came bustling into the room. Before Mrs. Holden could ask her visitor to be seated, she threw herself upon the nearest chair, and even the

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gray poke-bonnet, tied neatly under her chin, could not hide the emotion in her dark-brown eyes, which narrowed as she took Mrs. Holden in from head to foot:

“Oh, Maggie,—Maggie, how can you do it?”

“Do what?”

“Marry that man,—that the whole village is talking about. At church, quilting bees, the ladies aid, and even at prayer-meeting, all one hears is the coming marriage of the Widow Holden and Major Leroy. Is it true that you are going to marry him?”

“Am I on the witness stand, Mary?”—resenting for the first time the seeming interference of her old friend. “Why should I tell you, or any one, about my affairs,—if I do not wish to?”

“Because I love you, dear, and cannot bear to see you throw yourself away on a man who has always been an enemy to the South.”

“Mary, we cannot believe all we hear about people. If,—if I could only keep the Lodge—” her eyes filled with tears, as she looked about the old room, so rich in memories—“but I am helpless,—helpless, Mary, and I would do much to keep the old place!”

Just then Aunt Judy entered with the tea tray, and Maggie held up a warning finger, but not before that aged negress caught the morsel of gossip that she would repeat to old Tom that night. Courteously bowing to the ladies, broad as she was long, with one end of the red bandanna headgear flapping over her gray hair, and smiling cheerily as she hustled about fixing the tea on a small table

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before her mistress and the visitor, she turned to Mrs. Holden and said:

“Is dis all I k’n do for yo’ an’ Miss Mary, Miss Mag?”

“That is all, Aunt Judy.”

With a knowing look Aunt Judy courtesied again, as much like her mistress as possible, and left the room. Then silence fell upon these two women, who always had so much to say to each other. Mrs. Weatherford struggled with her tea, making an effort to drink it, while Mrs. Holden’s grew cold as she toyed with the spoon, waiting for Mary to speak, knowing well what was on her mind, but not willing herself to open the old wound.

Playing nervously with the ends of her gray and lavender knitted shawl, Mrs. Weatherford arose, and throwing back her head with dignity,—taking time to calmly put on her black lace mits,—she was about to leave the room without a word, when she turned impulsively with:

“Oh, Maggie, Maggie, a tumult rages within me when I think of you as you were in the old days, a belle of the South, who had the love of a man dear to us both, and now—” Mary’s hand tightened upon Maggie’s in the rapidly darkening library.

“He was not true to me, his family, or his country. Why talk of him, or the past?”

“He wronged us all, dear, but his brother Tom forgave him, and his mother died with his name on her lips.”

“But Mary, he is dead,—dead long ago, or we would have heard—”

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"Dead? perhaps so, but before I go let me show you something."

Together the two friends went to the nearest window, where in the fading light they turned the pages of a small black leather Bible. Mrs. Holden read the inscription and became as white as the fly-leaf upon which was written:

TOM WEATHERFORD,

FROM MOTHER.

Lower down, in the left-hand corner were the words:  
Found by Captain Booker, and presented to Ben Weatherford after the battle of Gettysburg.

Over and over again she read the words like one in a dream. "Ben,—Ben Weatherford was living after the battle of Gettysburg. Who knows?"

"Dear, stranger things have happened, but the mystery is how Tom's Bible came into the village. Old Tom brought it to me, saying a stranger gave it to one of the negroes, who gave it to him; and he, not knowing what to do with it, brought it to me."

"May I keep it,—just for to-night, Mary?"

"Yes, dear; forgive Ben, but more,—forget Sugar Leroy."

When Mary Weatherford stepped out into the twilight on her way home, she wore a relieved yet anxious expression, while Maggie Holden, with the little Bible in her hand, brightened as she turned again to the cheer of the long library, her favorite room in the old Lodge. There she dismissed Aunt Judy, and tried, too, to dismiss Ben Weatherford from

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her mind; but that was not so easily done. Mary and the Bible had started a flood of memories that would not down, although in that very room that afternoon, she had decided to begin life anew.

In the mellow light Maggie Holden opened the book and again turned its pages. Once more she was a girl again in the old home, where she and Ben had spent so many happy, happy hours together. She laughed aloud when she thought of the day in the peach orchard, laden with its pink-and-white blossoms, when she, dressed in a pretty pink-and-white check gown, with full fluffy ruffles to the waist, and a gorgeous pink bonnet over her long yellow curls, blushed, as he told her "she was the prettiest blossom of them all," and immediately began making love to her in his ardent, boyish way. And later, when he had found her crying—She had heard that he was going to join the Federal army, and as his views were not hers, when he came to tell her good-bye, they quarreled, and he went out of her life forever. Had an arrow pierced her heart from the unseen world? She had thought that love buried forever the day he went away.

Maggie sat long into the night with the Bible and her problem. Her revenue was going fast,—all the servants had gone save Aunt Judy, cook and house-keeper; John, the gardener, and little black Pete, Miss Mag's and Mammy's errand boy. It was inevitable, the crash might be delayed, but it was sure to come, and there was no way out—except. While dwelling on these things Maggie Holden fell asleep and knew not how long she had slept in the

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depths of the great armchair, until she was awakened by Aunt Judy, who exclaimed:

“ ‘Pon my soul, Miss Mag, I’se bin lookin’ all over dis heah house, an’ jes’ now found you. Has you slept heah all night by yo’se’f, an’ not call Judy?”

“I forgot to go to bed, Aunt Judy.”

“Dat’s funny. Yo’ ain nuver did sich er t’ing afore.”. A sudden light beamed in Aunt Judy’s eyes. “Somethin’s ailin’ you somewhar. Somethin’ mus’ be wrong wid yo’ heart, yo’ haid ain’ lakely ter act dat way. But come, honey, I’se brought yo’ some brekfus,—hot coffee an’ some nice cakes jes’ swimmin’ in Louis’ana lasses.”

The faithful negress fussed about Mrs. Holden as if she had been a child, then, helped her to dress, so that she got an early start on her way to Mrs. Weatherford’s.

Along the quiet country road Maggie Holden had time as she walked, listening to the birds in the trees making love to their mates, to weigh the love in her own heart,—a dead love that had suddenly been resurrected, against the urge of a man to whom she had made a half promise. The day was one of those fitful days in the early spring in the South: one moment the clouds obscuring the clear blue of the sky, the next the sun breaking through and lighting up the earth, with little patches of light, and Maggie’s thoughts were in keeping with the day.

Major Leroy made his advent into the village just before the war, from no one knew where, and it was rumored that he had made his money out of the South’s misfortune, trading her sugar and her secrets,

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which had given him the appellation of "Sugar Leroy". This had never been proven, and while he was liked by some, he was never popular with the people. His negroes, whom he ruled with an iron hand, feared him, all save Caroline.

Mrs. Holden had just reached the high iron gate over which a red rambler grew luxuriantly, and stopped beneath its sheltering enclosure, from which point of vantage she could see Caroline gesticulating excitedly, and overheard her words to the Major:

"'Fore Gawd, Marster, I'se glad I'se foun' you."

Short and stout he stood, his round pale-blue eyes blazing with anger.

"I never sent for you, Caroline. What are you doing here?"

"You mus' listen, Marster. I'se got somethin' ter tell you. You kno' de woods is full uv runerway niggers, what goes from one plantation ter anuder seizin' dey's hongry, dey got no clothes, nur nothin' ter eat; but sho's yo' bohn, dey doan fool Calline. Dey's up ter divilment, an' I kno' hit. But dis mornin's I wuz gwine erlong de road, an' I heerd er rattlin' in de fiel', an' 'stead uv an onery nigger, dar stood er nicelookin' gentleman by de fence, an' he said:

"'Howdy.'

"'I'se tol'ble,' sez I.

"'Whar yo' gwine?' sez he.

"'Howcome yo' ax me dat, Marster?'

"'Dat's fur you ter guess,' sez he. 'But jes' turn 'bout an' go ter Major Leroy, an' tell him dars bin er yerthquake at Carlton, an' de fiah is jes' er ragin' an' takin' uvrythin' in sight."

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"Damn it, Caroline! Why did you take all this time to tell me this—" At that moment the Major caught sight of Mrs. Holden among the foliage and ran towards her.

"You are just in time to hear the bad news. Caroline has been telling me that Carlton has had an earthquake, and the town is being destroyed by fire. I have valuable property there, Mrs. Holden,—Maggie, and I must leave at once. You made me so happy,—the night of the bazar, the first real hope you have given me; and when I return—" Maggie's eyes lowered, her lips came together tightly, and the Major caught sight of the Bible she held.

"What's that? On your way to Bible class?" he asked lightly, "or to teach the heathens of the village?"

Maggie Holden lifted her eyes and looked straight and cool into his.

"Only a Bible that Mary loaned to me, which I am returning now. Would you like to see it?"

The Major took the book, opened it, and he, too, changed color as he read the inscription, but with a far different emotion from Maggie's.

"Ben Weatherford!" he muttered between set teeth. What could it mean, and why should he come between him and the woman he wanted? From out the past Ben Weatherford's face, silent and stern, came before him, menacing him just as he was on the verge of victory. But there was no time to talk with Mrs. Holden. Ike had turned the corner with the carryall. Ben Weatherford was dead,—there was no fear of him, he reasoned, as he cautioned Ike to look after the place while he was gone. Bidding Mrs. Holden

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good-bye, Leroy jumped into the carryall and drove toward Carlton. She watched him out of sight, and little did he dream of the power of a small book to upset his plans.

The Major drove furiously at first, then he slackened his speed and jogged along the rough country roads at a comfortable pace, thinking of Maggie, and the little Bible. He was not so sure of her now. She had looked at him so strangely. He wished he had taken her along with him and been married at Carlton. That would have been romantic,—or that he had taken old Ike along for company. The journey was tiresome, the roads rough and growing darker with every mile. There was not a star to be seen, nor a moon to light the way. The earth was shrouded in a mantle of black; and no sound of a living soul, save the cry of the frogs, or the hoot of an owl, when the old sorrel suddenly shied. The driver leaned far forward and saw the outline of a tall white figure. Almost dead with fright, he managed to shout:

“Who’s there?”

“The ghost of Ben Weatherford!” a voice hissed, as it caught the bridle of the horse, and a long white arm pointed toward Carlton. “There is no earthquake, nor fire there! The clan have found the proofs against you. You have systematically robbed the people of this section for years. You came first as an overseer on one of the large plantations, where you beat and abused the negroes and laid the blame upon the master. You profiteered with our sugar until you became rich and arrogant. You traded in negroes and squeezed every man to the last dollar. You have

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deceived Mrs. Holden,—have speculated with her property and lost,—that you might force her into marriage. The Kuklux Clan has disbanded, but it can come together to rid the country of such as you, and they now determine that you shall hang to the nearest tree unless you leave this country at once, and promise never to return."

Trembling from head to foot with fear, as he saw other white forms moving amid the blackness, it did not take the Major long to promise, nor to start the old sorrel on its way to a place of safety. The people of Sunnybrook never saw nor heard of him again.

The village bells were calling the people to church, and Maggie Holden, attractive in a dainty blue bom-bazine, with bonnet and sash to match, started in that direction; but something in the warm, exhilarating air, full of the perfume of flower and foliage, made her change her mind and turn her eyes longingly toward the hill. She was impressed with the thought that she must go to the cemetery. Half-way up she saw old Tom on his way to put flowers on "Marse Tom's" grave. Every Sunday morning found him there.

Stopping first at her lot, then resting on a nearby rustic bench, she watched Tom at work. He apparently did not notice her, but soon she saw him watching some one coming up the hill, as he talked half aloud and half to himself:

"Dar, on my soul, he's comin' now! He's de same gen'leman. He's done passed de schoolhouse whar Miss Mag and Marse Ben uster go to school tergedder.

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Now he's over de style whar Marse Ben uster holp her an' kerry her books home."

Mrs. Holden sat motionless. Tom's voice seemed off in the distance, but the approaching stranger fascinated her. Who could he be? As he came nearer, something bade her step behind the nearest tree,—near enough to see and hear, but not to be seen. Drawing her veil close about her face, she quietly waited.

"You's back ergin, sah?" Tom said, as he recognized the stranger.

"Yes, Tom."

"Marster, I'se gwine ter ax yo'er question. Somus you look lak you come from de North. Did you, sah?"

"Yes, Tom."

"An"—an' you fit on 'tuther side?"

"Yes, Tom."

"Lawdy, I kno'd hit de minute I sot my ole eyes on you. Marse Tom had a brudder whut fit on de Northern side."

It was all the white man could do to keep from throwing his arms around the old negro, as he said:

"Don't you know me, Tom? don't you know me?"

"'Fore Gawd, ef hit ain' Marse Ben! I'm a fool nigger not ter have know'd hit from de fust!"

At the words "Marse Ben," Maggie Holden never knew why it was she did not run to him and make herself known, nor why Tom did not call to her. In a dazed way she stood rooted to the spot and listened to Tom's quaint intonation.

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"You sho'look er leetle lak you uster, Marse Ben. Come on ter Miss Mary. Gawd bless her, her done forgit de past long ago. De smokehouse iz jes'as full of jucy hams an' mincemeat an' cakes as hit uster be, an'whut er time we's gwine ter have, er-celebratin' when Marse Ben comes home. I say, Marster, yo's er-comin' home, ain' you, Marse Ben?"

"But,—but what about Miss Maggie, Tom?"

Maggie held her breath as Tom glanced nervously toward the tree where she was hiding:

"Oh, yas, sah: Miss Maggie, sah, de—de Major did try moughty hard ter git her,—but shucks! Marse Ben, her nuver would have hitched up with him. 'Sides, he's gwine erway from dese parts."

Then, raising his voice, as if to make sure that Mrs. Holden would hear, he added:

"Her doan forgit de old days,—nur you, Marse Ben,—nur you."

"God bless old Tom!" thought Maggie Holden, as she stood still in hiding behind the old tree. Soon both men had disappeared,—Tom to go to Miss Mary with the good news, while Ben Weatherford went through the streets of his old home like one lost amid familiar surroundings, deaf to everything save the words he kept repeating:

"She does'nt forget the old days, nor you, Marse Ben,—nor you."

A joy greater than anything he had ever known was surging in his heart. Little did he care that none knew him. Every moment he was drawing closer and closer to the old love, and before he realized it, he was staring at the words "Holden

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"Lodge" over a stone archway, then he was in the doorway, Aunt Judy bowing and saying:

"I reckon I kin fotch her, sah. Jes' step inside de doo'." Down the hall to the library he remembered so well, with its rich old tapestries and colonial furniture, he went, then paused.

He heard the rustle of a woman's dress, the step of a woman he knew and loved so well, and then once more Ben Weatherford was rewarded for the long, sad years when he found his answer in the eyes of Maggie Holden.

## UNDER THE SHADOW OF SHILOH

Louise Willard,—dainty and fragile as a hot-house plant, with dreamy hazel eyes under long brown lashes that fell like a lace fringe on her soft pale cheeks, and with golden-brown curls that refused to be confined and peeped out from a pretty lace cap like the tendrils of a flower seeking the sunlight;—watched the slender, straight figure of her handsome husband striding back and forth along the great white corridor. His features were clear-cut; his eyes deep-set and dark gray, his manner that of a Chesterfield. At the first rumor of war, she knew that he, like all his clan, would go to the front at his country's call, for he came of a family of fighting blood.

His great-grandfather was an officer in the Revolution; his father represented his district in Congress eight years; another ancestor was one of the heroes of King's Mountain, while all down the line the men had been prominent in public and military life,—true statesmen in every sense of the word. And now the blow had fallen to separate the Union.

Robert Willard had never believed in the War between the States, always hoping the question would be settled some other way. He had graduated with honor from the University of Virginia, and was making rapid strides in his profession of the law. When

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the war-cloud broke over his home, no man was happier or more full of ambition for the future which held so much for himself and his adorable young wife."

The fresh, sweet smell of springtime came through the open window while Louise listened as he talked aloud, walking back and forth, his hands behind his back:

"I love my country, but I love more my State and my home. I am opposed to secession and fought it bitterly, but when other Southern States have withdrawn from the Union, there is nothing left but to go with them, and raise seventy-five thousand men, if necessary, to aid them—"

"And your decision, Robert?"

"So you have heard, Louise," he replied, lifting his eyes with a smile, to meet a brave but pathetic answer in hers. "The Governor urges upon me a colonel's commission, has advised that I raise a regiment in the county where I was born and reared, and where my family influence is great—"

"And you told him—"

Sparks of blue fire flashed from the intelligent gray eyes as he answered:

"That I prefer to enlist as a private soldier amongst troops raised by the commonwealth. If I gain honors, Louise, I will have earned them."

Again the girl-wife smiled, but through tears, as she clung to him. Robert Willard turned to Mammy Dinah, who had followed her mistress, knowing the hour had come "when Marse Bob wuz gwine ter jine de army," and said:

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"Be good to Miss Louise. I am leaving her and Father Willard in your care. Protect them with your life."

Louise followed him down the long walk hedged with arbor vitæ. To the day of her death the scene of his going was indelibly impressed on her memory. The husband took her in his arms and kissed her good-bye. Then she waved her handkerchief as long as she could see his distinguished figure, and suddenly everything was shrouded in darkness and she remembered nothing more until she opened her eyes in her own blue-and-white bedroom where she lay still under cool linen sheets and a white coverlid, her soul heavy with the first great sorrow of her life. She stirred slightly when a black face bent over her:

"Hit's on'y Dinah, honey. I kno'd Marse Bob wuz gwine ter de wah, an' I sed ter myse'f: 'Dat b'essed chile sho' gwine ter need me now.' Doan you worrit 'bout him, nuther. He's boun'ter be er big Gin'al or Major ur sum big man, ca'se whin Dinah feels hit, you can count on hit shure. Dar, I made you smile, and' you look jes' lak de angel yo' iz."

Mammy Dinah snugly tucked the bedclothes about the young wife, drew the blinds, and quietly stole downstairs. A slight breeze faintly stirred the white curtains at the open windows through which the voices of the negroes came up to Louise's bedroom:

"Swing low sweet char'ot, swing low fo'ter kerry me home."

Louise smiled in spite of her sorrow. "Always a laugh or a song on their lips!" she thought. "How

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happy they are! Like little children, they cannot realize what this war means. O God, if it were only over and Robert safe at home again!"

Then her eyes fell upon a picture of her husband when he was ten years of age, and the memory of the day he came into her life was as fresh as if it had been yesterday:

She, a happy, carefree child playing along the bank of the creek, which ran just beyond the line of her father's property, with a little fellow about her own age. How long it had been since she had thought of him,—though he had been her first childhood sweetheart. They pulled off their shoes and stockings and were in wading together. She was teasing him, when in mischief he pushed her off the log on which she was standing, and she fell into the swollen stream. It was but a moment when she felt a strong grasp upon her shoulder, and quickly she was brought safely to shore. She looked at her rescuer. He was a boy much bigger than she; and he turned upon the younger one and, giving him a scolding he would never forget, sent him home crying. Then, taking Louise by the hand, he led her home. She soon learned that the big boy was Robert Willard, the son of their neighbor, whose ancestral acres almost touched those of her people. To put it in Dinah's words:

"No wunder Marse Bob an' my sweet baby-chile got marrhied! Dey cou'dnt he'p deyse'ves: dey jes' grow'd up tergedder."

John McKnight, Louise's father, a doughty old Scotch Presbyterian, had bought Dinah from a trader's

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house when a mere child on his bridal trip through Washington, Baltimore, and Richmond. Her mother had just been sold to a man ahead of him. He wanted both mother and child, as he did not believe in separating a mother and young child, or man and wife. He saw the child alone and crying, and pitying her, he gave eight hundred and fifty dollars for her, afterwards refusing ten hundred and fifty dollars because he would never part from her. It was evening down in the kitchen, Dinah's domain, over which she presided with pride, Roxy being "second cook" when "Mammy" was busy elsewhere; for she was "head" of the three hundred negroes "Marse John" had presented to Louise and Robert as a bridal present when they were married. The kitchen, a large, airy room, was to the rear of the house, across a lawn, which in summer was kept as smooth as a velvet carpet. There Mammy Dinah was mixing dough for beaten biscuits, and brooding, as she glanced out of the window over her long, spotless table, seeing the fields beyond and the river, which was like a silver sheet with a path of gold across it, as the sun's matchless rays fell lower and lower until lost beyond the distant hill. She shook her head and sighed.

"Hits er kintry fit fo' er king to live in, an' yit dey's er fittin' an' fitten' trying her kill deyse'ves an' ebrybudy else. Whut fo', God on'y kno's. Dar's room 'nouf fo' ebrybudy in de wurl' widout cumin' down heah ter run dis part fo' us."

Between the house and the river lay the open country,—a fine vantage ground over which the eye

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could see for miles. Through the tall spare pines and nearer cedars a shadow fell across the door.

"Mah Gawd! whut's dat?"

"For God's sake, Mammy Dinah, give me something to eat; then I must see Miss Louise."

And a slender young man stumbled into the room and fell into the nearest chair.

"Pon my wud, ef hit ain' Marse Clarence! Hole you' bref, li'lle marster. You may have sumthin' to eat, but you cain' see Miss Louise, ca'se her ain' well, an' her's restin'."

"Where's your Marse Robert?"

"Whar you oughter be. Whut you doin' heah, eny-way? 'Fore Gawd, you ain'no backslider, iz you?"

Louise, hearing the sound of talking below, put on her négligée and slippers, and reached the kitchen in time to hear Dinah's last words.

"Clarence—Clarence Young!" she gasped.

The man waved his hand, as if to put Dinah aside, then came to Louise.

"I must speak to you alone, Louise."

"Mammy remains here. Say what you will, Clarence, and be quick about it."

"Louise, Robert is my friend, and I would not wrong him nor you, but you know how I have always felt toward you. My God! In this awful war I cannot sleep for thinking of you. Every way I turn it seems as if some sorrow were enfolding you. When bullets sing about me and shells burst overhead, I think of you alone in this house, with only old man Willard and Mammy Dinah. Under the stars last night I dreamed that I would be killed, and would

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never see you again. I became frantic and knew that I must flee, somehow and somewhere, out of that hell! O Louise, it's horrible,—horrible! I cannot go back. I am ashamed to confess it, but I can't stand on my legs to fight longer. Have pity on me, and tell me what I must do?"

The woman's heart filled with anguish for the boy she had known from childhood. His wail was so like that of a stricken child that at first the mother instinct bade her console and protect him; then, realizing she was harboring a deserter, she drew herself up proudly, and controlling the sympathy in her calm clear voice, said:

"Clarence, when a little boy you were not a coward. When you were grown you were a man of honor,—you are now. You are brave, and I—I believe in you. You volunteered to fight for the South. Then, fight with the last drop of blood in your body, and never look on my face until you, like Robert, have done your duty by your country. Good-bye, and God speed."

What a blessing it is we cannot know what lies before us! If we did we might not have strength to go on, and Louise Willard needed strength in those terrible days. In her eyes there was a look of longing and of fear such as is seen in the eyes of a hunted deer. One morning, on her way to breakfast, she stopped in the garden to see if any early flowers were coming up, and noticed on the rim of the horizon a dark outline clouding the splendor of the day. She wondered if that were smoke from a battle being fought? She thought of what Clarence

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had said; she wondered if his fear for her was the foreshadowing of trouble to come? But she struggled with the feeling at her heart and determined to be brave even though Robert was away,—happy for the little life that was coming to them.

She crossed the yard to pat old Brindle, whose young heifer was pulling at a frayed rope on the other side of the fence, impatient for her breakfast, and smiled at the mother love in the cow's eyes. In the doorway of the kitchen stood Mammy Dinah, and over her kindly black face broke a broad smile as she saw Louise coming toward her. She sent Mose to the spring for water, and put Roxy to paring potatoes for a big dish of "frys" for Miss Louise. Over the soft Southern air came again the old familiar song:

"Swing low sweet char'ot, swing low fo'ter kerry me home."

"Dem's de beat'ness niggers I eber seed, Miss Louise: dey kno' de times iz gittin' moughty hot, an' dey ain' doin' nuthin' cep havin' er good time an' singin' lak dey allus does. Dey doan beliebe much in dis wah, nohow. C'n you percallate sich er t'ing, Miss Louise? An' sum ob dese high falutin' cullard fo'ks sez deir ain' gwine ter be no wah! But Dinah kno's presac'ly whut's gwine ter happen, an' in circumla'ion ob dat fac', whut you reckon I'se dun dis bery mornin'."

"That's not easy to guess, Mammy Dinah."

"I jes nacherly kerried off all de fam'bly silver, an' bur'ied hit deep in de groun' at de back ob de house. Now tek dis chere, honey, an'sit right down

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whilst Mammy gits yo' bre'kfus riddy. An' I wan'er see you laffin', honey, ca'se hit makes you look lak an angel allus. Dat's why I'm gwine ter tell you ob de flustratin' time ob mah life, whin David, who's been gone dese many yeahs, an' me got hitch'd in de matrimonial markit. Wal, I wuz de bes lookin' gal ole Miss an' Marster had, an' I reckon ole Miss sp'ilt me givin' me her ole cloes an' sich lak; an' 'bout dat time I wuz fixin' ter git marrhied, but I wuz disgaged ter two men,—David an' John. I tole John he wuz han'sum, an' sed er lot ob sweet wuds ter him, an' he tuk flatterin' lak er bee teks honey, an' you kno' dat fool nigger nacherly beleb'd hit. Dey all tole him I wuz gwine ter marry David,—but he thought he kno'd. Den my weddin' night cum, an' Ole Miss guv me er fine weddin'. She tuk me right in de big house, he'ped me put on my weddin' dress, and wid her own han's pin'd er w'ite rose in my ha'r. De big doo's ob de long parlor open'd, an' Ole Miss sed "step in Dinah" an' Dinah sho' did, but not de way dey wuz lookin' fo'. De w'ite fo'ks cum fust, den de sarvents, an' de li'l pickaninnies all 'bout de doo'. Dar wuz six bridesmaids an' six bridesgrums, an' John wuz waitin' wid de parson. But I wa'k'd right out on the floo' wid David, an' John,—wal, he had ter be toted out, wid ebrybudy lookin' wid all deir eyes."

"How could you be so wicked, Mammy?"

"Wal, honey, I tuk de man I lub'd."

This brought a hearty laugh from Louise, and Mammy Dinah was satisfied.

Louise was deeply imbued with the patriotic, un-

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selfish spirit of the women of the old South. Through the long days the look in her eyes grew sadder, and the longing for news of Robert grew greater, yet her time was filled with work, sending packages to the boys on the firing line, ministering always to the "cause" and making sacrifices for her beloved Southland. The evenings were mostly spent with Father Willard, when she would read to him until he fell asleep in his chair, then with the assistance of Ike, his man-servant, he would retire for the night, Louise going to her room, where Mammy Dinah would follow, to turn down her bed, lay out her nightgown, and assist her young mistress to undress, then would take down her hair and braid it for the night.

"Honey-chile," she would say, as she brushed the glossy brown locks, "fixin' yo' p'utty long ha'r 'minds me ob de time whin I uster undress Ole Miss, an' plait her long shiny ha'r whut wuz so much lak yo's in de light ob de log fiah; an' all de time I wuz er-brushin' an' combin' hit she'd read de Scripter to me. Marse John had er heaps er money and niggers den, an' dey tuk me all ober de kintry wid 'em, ca'se I had been promosted ter be Ole Miss's waitin' maid, an' ter look atter her cloes an' finery. Oh, de good times we uster have,—an' de a'rs we sho' did put on!"

While Mammy was brushing and talking, Louise's thoughts were far away. She was thinking of Robert and wondering if he would return in time for the great event to which she and Dinah were looking forward. Then she stopped the stroke of the brush, and whispered into Mammy Dinah's ear:

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"We must keep it secret, Mammy."

"Whut secret, honey-chile?" Dinah teasingly questioned.

"Oh, you precious old Mammy,—you know. But we must keep it from every one else, until Robert returns."

"Oh, dat secret! Wal, I reckon I kin keep hit ez long es enybudy. But I wish he'd cum now an' see yo' eyes er shinin' so bright an' p'utty."

"Mammy, I'm so tired, heartsick, and heavy with foreboding. Sometimes I feel that I will never see Robert again. Oh, pray that this cruel war will soon be over."

In an instant the old negress was on her knees:

"O Lawd, we ax you ter cum ter us in all dis tr'uble. Be wid Marse Bob, Miss Louise, an' all de rebels. Stop all dis fittin', good Marster, an' brung Marse Bob home ter be wid de sweet y'ung mist'ess, who's soon gwine ter be er mudder. Keep her an' de li'l one safe 'til he does git back. Her Heart's moughty heaby ez her fixes de li'l cradle in de nu'sery, an' sews on the cloes fo' de baby-chile whu's cumin'. An' we pray hit's gwine ter be jes' de bery image ob Marse Bob."

"This we ask for Christ's sake, Amen."

It was Louise who ended the prayer; and as she arose to her feet, Dinah put her arm lovingly about her, and said:

"Doan worrit no more, baby-chile. Ef de Lawd iz on our side, dar's no use worryin', an' ef he ain', dar's no use, nuther,—ca'se we's in His han's eny-way, an' He's allus mindful ob us."

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Life would have been unbearable for Louise without Dinah, for no one knew what a day or an hour would bring forth, and that faithful soul's courage and spirit were high at all times.

It was a beautiful spring morning in '62,—when tiny buds of leaf and blossom were breaking into life,—that Louise stood at her window, looking out over the broad acres that had once been so rich a heritage. But things had sadly changed since her young husband had gone down the long walk to battle. One by one the negroes were leaving. Father Willard, worn and weary, his heart bleeding for his son and stricken country, was helpless, and the home, like many others, was shrouded in gloom, when hearts should have been at peace with one another. Louise was startled by a sound at the door. Turning, she saw by Dinah's expression that something was wrong:

“ ‘Fore Gawd, Miss Louise, I jes’ met ‘Liza Jane,—Marse John’s ‘Lize,—on de road frum town, an’ her sez, dar’s been er turrible battle fit. Dey ain’ got all de news yit,—but we gwine-er kno’ soon. T’ank Gawd, Ole Miss iz out’n all dis fuss ‘bout freein’ er nigger whut doan wan’ er be free. But I wish Marse Bob wuz heah.”

“Why, Mammy? Are you scared?”

“Scat! who sed I wuz scat? Dat’s downright scan'lous, Miss Louise. Me! Marse John’s Dinah!—ter be insulted after all dese yeahs in de fam’bly. I wou’dnt run frum er rigiment of Yankees; but all de same, hits well ter ’member dar’s er pesky lot ob

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'em 'roun' jes' now, an' hit pays ter be on de safe side."

Louise failed to respond to Dinah's humor.

"Whut ails my baby chile?" Dinah inquircd anxiously. "I jes' worrit 'bout you all de time; an' now I'se dun gone an' hu't you."

"No, Mammy Dinah, you cannot hurt me. I love and trust you always. But I'm thinking of what you just told me,—of Robert, and oh, Mammy, I'm longing for news from Robert!"

"An' I've got hit fo' you, honey chile."

And she handed Louise the long-looked-for letter.

"Where did you get it, Mammy?"

"Oh dat scamp, Marse Clarence, brung hit ter me: an' his eyes wuz shinin' bright ez he tole me how dey had the Yanks on de run. He sed er lot ob nice t'ings 'bout Marse Bob, an' dat dey'd bofe be home afore long. But read hit, honey-chile; hit tells you all in de letter."

Louise eagerly tore open the envelope and devoured every word of the written page. When she finished, all her pentup grief broke into a flood of tears, and throwing herself into Dinah's arms, she sobbed:

"It's from Bob, Mammy, and he is Colonel Robert Willard now. Colonel of the Twenty-seventh Tennessee! and Dinah—"

"Read hit loud honey-chile,—read hit loud."

"A friend wrote him while in the field that his home was threatened by the Federals, and that if he wanted to save his property, he had better come back."

"An' Marse Bob tole him he gwine ter stay

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right whar he iz. Ain' dat in de letter, baby-chile?"

"You are right, Mammy. His answer to his friend was that if he wished to save his honor, he had better come out."

'Liza Jane's message proved to be true. At day-break a battle had been fought when the Confederates had surprised the Federal camp, and all day, over the uneven ground, the confusion and fighting were terrific. But the various Federal divisions were kept to their work,—intrenched behind low hills, they fought and were repulsed. At any cost they must resist the onslaught of the Confederates, for on the morrow Buell would arrive with reënforcements. But the Federals were being worsted, numbers had given up,—they were seeking places of safety along the river bank. Their ranks were thinning and they were hemmed in on all sides, when lo! the tide of battle is turning. Bragg was about to head the final charge, when an order was sent to cease firing, and though he exclaimed: "Is a victory ever sufficiently complete?" he obeyed, and the firing ceased.

The brave General Johnston was dead,—had he lived, another story might have been written.

That night the men lay on their arms,—the next morning the Federals were reënforced with twenty-five thousand fresh troops. Both sides suffered terrible slaughter in that hornet's nest wherein the assailants were stung to death. But the hope and ardor of the Southern soldier were weakening. Heart sick, footsore, weary, and hungry, when victory was almost within their reach they fell back point after

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point until toward evening Beauregard admitted his defeat, and through rain and cutting hail, the Confederates turned back upon Corinth. So much history tells us. But what of the broken hearts at home, as death reaped his mighty carnage on the field of battle!

From behind hills and rude breastworks two armies,—the blue and gray,—struggled for mastery over rough ground slippery with the blood of many heroes. From the fields canon belched their fury, while lightening flashed from rifles, mowing men to earth like grains of sand. In the midst of shot and shell the brave Colonel Robert Willard of the Twenty-Seventh Tennessee, with bullets whizzing through the air, made a charge on a Federal battery upon an elevation, and after two horses had been shot under him, had approached through an open field, down one side, across a branch, and up on the other, where he was killed at the head of his men.

Through an incomprehensible blunder many heroes fell under the shadow of Shiloh, when victory might have been theirs. Many mother hearts of the North as well as the South were crushed under the shadow of that great battle.

Suspense, anxiety, dread was depicted on every countenance in the Willard home. For once Mammy Dinah's cheery smile was gone. Vast acres, wealth, family influence was nothing now. Death stalked in its place. The hours dragged by on leaden wheels, as Louise, the sad-eyed wife, waited for news of her husband. Little did she dream that the gallant Twenty-seventh Tennessee was so shattered that it

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was a regiment in name only. Her bleeding heart was crying aloud for Robert. Some one said that Corinth had fallen! but what of him she loved more than life? Were they all deaf and dumb that they did not know her heart was breaking:

"O God" she cried, "can I stand it much longer?"

Slowly and cautiously the door opened, and Dinah's black arms were outstretched to her.

"Mammy Dinah, what news? But stay! you need not tell me. I see by your face,—I know—"

"I cain' say hit, honey-chile." And Dinah's voice was choked with sobs. "Be brave lak you allus iz. Mammy iz gwine ter stay wid you an'put you ter bed lak I uster whin you wuz er li'l chile. Mammy iz nuver gwine ter leab you, an' jes' res' aisy in yo' ole Mammy's arms."

Tenderly she lifted Louise and carried her to her room; and after she had put her young mistress to bed, she realized that her Louise was really ill. She summoned Father Willard, who sent for the family physician, and with him Mammy Dinah took her place at the bedside.

From the first everything was against Louise: her delicate constitution, the strain and worry of the war, and more than all, her sad bereavement. She could not live without Robert. The doctor and Mammy felt that if only her strength would hold out, she might yet live for the babe God had given her. But the young mother was weakening. No hand could stay the dread destroyer, and toward morning Dinah softly tiptoed to Marse Willard's room and gently rapped.

## UNDER THE SHADOW OF SHILOH

"Marster, Miss Louise iz axin' fo' you," she said softly, on his opening the door. Dinah and the old man together returned to the sick chamber, but when he saw Louise,—his son's wife,—he knew that she had gone. Her pure soul had flown to meet Robert, the brave Colonel Robert Willard of the Twenty-seventh Tennessee.

With tears trickling down her cheeks Mammy Dinah lifted the wee baby girl from the side of her dead mother, and hugging her closely, crooned:

"I'm gwine ter name her Louise, Marse Willard, fo' her's de p'utties' baby chile in all de wurl', an' jes' de bery image ob Marse Bob."

# UNCLE EPHRAIM

A STORY OF DEVOTION

Walking leisurely along the quiet country lane was Ephraim,—“Uncle Eph” the children called him,—while here and there among big and beautiful trees, green foliage, and pretty flowers in the little village (commonly termed the “city of roses” before the war) the homes of the village people, with their newly whitewashed fences, were dotted. Even the barns had the appearance of exhilarating freshness, and nature, attired in her prettiest spring dress, smiled in sunny brightness upon this annual holiday.

It was a typical Southern day, this beautiful morning in the ’70’s, some years after peace had been declared and freedom was abroad in the land. Every one was early astir, Ephraim among the rest; and as he journeyed along he was thinking “ob de w’ite fo’ks an’ de chilluns gittin’ riddy fo’de celebra-shun, an’ er-wunderin’ who de Queen ob de May wuz gwine ter be.”

Muttering half to himself and half aloud, a peculiar habit of the old negroes, he ran against Uncle Simon coming from the opposite direction.

“Howdy, Brudder Mason. Lawdy! yo’ cum on ter me so sudden lak, yo’ scat me mos’ ter de’th. How’s Mes Mason? We’s members ob de same chu’ch; but I ain’ seen her in a mont’ ob Sundays.”

“Her’s tol’ble, Brudder Jones,” replied Brudder

## UNCLE EPHRAIM

Mason. "Her wuz porely all de winter, but now de spring dun sot in her's gittin' on fas' 'nuf."

"I wuz jes' er-specerlatin', Brudder Mason, ez I cum erlong," continued Uncle Eph, "'bout de way de black fo'ks iz er-doin' dese days. Dey wuz moughthy diff'unt befo' de wah, yo' kno'."

"Dat am de Gawd's truf, Brudder Jones, sence I'se cum ter t'ink erbout it. De niggers iz pow'ful diff'unt. Sum' thin' dun got de matter wid 'em sence dey'se free. Befo' de wah dey wuk all de week, an' whin de Lawd's day cum 'roun' dey wuz glad ter walk miles ter er meetin' house, er eben in de wuds, an' sing an' shout an' praise de Lawd de whole bressed day. Dat wuz rale down shoutin' 'ligion."

"Yas, Brudder Mason," interrupted Brudder Jones, "dat's de kin' ob Chrischuns dey wuz den. But dese days all de cullard fo'ks t'inks erbout iz dressin' fine like de w'ite fo'ks, puttin' on heaps ob a'rs wid deir eddicashun an' highfalutin' noshuns. No, dem ole days wuz de bes' Brudder Mason; but dey'll nuver cum back ter Eph no mo'. Dey tells me I wuz er slave den an' am free now; but, Brudder Mason, I wuz free den an' am now de pores' kin' ob a slave, kase I had de bes' Marster dat eber lived. I had no cloes nur nothin' ter buy, nur I wuz'nt keerin' fo' money. I wuz jes' happy all de time,—an' now I sho'ly has ter wuk fu'de li'lle I gits. An' I'm gitting ole now, an' de Lawd kno's how dis pore ole body am gwine ter be decin'ly buried. I of'en studies 'bout de ole times on de plantashun in Virginny."

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And Uncle Eph looked away into the distance, as if seeing again those old days as they really were. His eyes were dim with tears. Brushing them with his ragged coat sleeve, he continued:

"An' I sees de ole smokehouse full ob de nices' home-cured hams an' eb'ry thing good ter eat, dat jes' makes yo' mouf water, an' tears cum ter yo' eyes whin yo' t'ink' 'bout it. An—an' mor'n all,— dem sweet chilluns,—Lawd Bress 'em! Dar wuz de two boys, but Miss Linnie, de yun'st chile, wid de big blue eyes jes' lak Heaven, wuz my li'le Missus, an' my fav'rite. Her uster cum ter me whin her wuz so high, an' climb up on my knee, an' say: 'Tell me, Eph, 'bout de goblins dat cums down chimbleys rainy nights.' An' I tolle her sich stories dat her loved; den de nuss wou'd cum an' tuck her in her li'le w'ite bed. Dat wuz long befo' de wah; an' whin de fust note sounded, her had been marrhied jes er yeah or so ter Marse Edward, one ob de bes' yung gen'leman ob de quality fo'ks in dat part ob de kintry."

Eph paused to ascertain whether he was boring his old friend; but Brudder Mason was one of the speaker's kind and intensely interested in the old man's story. Regaining his breath, Eph went on:

"Wal, ez I wuz gwine ter say: whin de wah dun break out, Marse Edward an' de boys tolle us good-bye den lef' Miss Linnie an' mese'f ter look arter ole Marster en de plantashun, w'ile dey jined de army."

There came a break in the old negro's voice; but he choked back the sobs, and wiped the tears from his eyes.

## UNCLE EPHRAIM

"I dunno' how long dey fit, but hit seem'd er moughthy long time ter us, erlone on de place, whin one day dar cum de news dat Marse Edward wuz killed. Soon arter dat de boys wuz kilt too. Ole Miss died befo' de wah,—t'ank Gawd!—case her nuver wou'd er liv'd tru hit. Den de ole Marster dun lose all his money en he wuz one ob de richest men in de kintry befo' de wah—en all his niggers, en—en—ebrythin' wen'. Den one day he say ter me: 'Eph, yo' been er good nigger all dese yeahs, en' yo's free now, en ez I has los' all I had, I cain' 'spec' yo' ter wuk fo' nuthin'; so yo' better git somwhar whar yo' kin make some money.' Wal dat got my goat—ter t'ink arter all dose yeahs he'd say dat ter me! An' whut yo' reckon I tolle him, Brudder Mason?"

"I kno', Brudder Jones,—yo' jes' sed, dat yo' wuz gwine ter stay wid him 'till de good Marster call'd yo' up yunder."

"I sho' did, Brudder Mason. I jes' staid by him en Miss Linnie. My pore li'lle Mist'ess heart wuz mos' broke, but we tuk keer ob him, an' nuss'd him 'till he died. Den de wus' cum: de ole home wuz broke up; Miss Linnie wen' ter some ob her kinfo'ks, an' I mosed erlong sumhow till I cum hyar, whar's I been eber sence. Brudder Mason, ole Marse en Miss iz up yunder long ergo; but somus I off'n wunders ter mese'f whar my li'lle Mist'ess iz. She wuz de life ob de w'ole plantashun, en maybe her's er sleepin' in de cimetry now."

This thought was too much for the old man and the tears, suppressed before, now ran down his

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rough but honest black face, so that Brudder Mason concluded it was best not to linger longer.

"Good-bye, Brudder Jones," said Uncle Simon, his heart full of sympathy, "but I mus' be gittin' erlong. De ole 'ooman iz waitin' fo' me."

"An' I sho' mus' be movin', kase I dun promuse de wite fo'ks ter he'p 'em terday. Good-bye, Brudder Mason; en de Lawd be wid you."

A turn in the road brought Uncle Eph's own cabin to view. It was only a weather-beaten negro shanty, but it had been freshly whitewashed, and with the creeping vines over it and the black faces of the children outlined against the light and dark green of tree and foliage, it made a pretty Southern picture, as it nestled beneath a cluster of towering oaks heavy with age. Coming up to Dode, who was singing at the top of her voice he began:

"Dode, yo' iz er happy gal, yes, yo' iz. Jes' lak de w'ite fo'ks, yes, yo' iz." Then catching her by the arm he demanded:

"Stop dat fuss, howlin' en screechin' dat way, en tell me whar yo' mammy iz? Wid you er-singin' en dancin' de liblong day, en Sambo giglin' de res' ob de time, I dunno how yo' mammy gits erlong wid yo', nohow."

"Her's in thar." And Dode pointed a greasy black finger toward the cabin, while she danced a regular shindig around her daddy's legs.

Ephraim found his wife busy with the day's ironing for "since the war," she had done her part by "tekin' in washin' fur sum ob de quality

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fo'ks," while Uncle Eph did "easy jobs" wherever he could find them, saying to his white friends:

"Yer kno' I'se gittin' ole,—mos' er hundered or so, case I'se been heah er long long time befo' you wuz bohned, an' I has ter be keerful lak, but in co'se I'se glad ter git de money dese days ter tek keer ob my growin' fam'bly whut kin eat ter beat de ban'."

Aunt Dilsie was ready to sate his appetite, as she greeted him with a nod of her red bandanna head, and motioned him to a table on which was a clean white oilcloth with his midday meal of "b'iled greens with a hunk of side meat, and a bit ob hoecake" baked in the ashes awaiting him.

So engrossed was Eph in doing justice to Aunt Dilsie's cooking that he almost forgot the day, when suddenly on the quiet country air came the sound of many voices. Aunt Dilsie dropped her iron, Sambo pricked up his ears, and Dode kept silent for once, as they filed out into the yard.

Then Ephraim, remembering the cause of the disturbance, started on a run, waving his hat and exclaiming with a loud shout:

"Lawd er massy! I'll sho'ly be late; fur dar dey cum now!"

"Whut's cumin', Pap?" asked Sambo, throwing a rock at Dode.

"Oh, Pappy," cried Dode, "look at Sambo. He's split me haid mos' open wid er rock."

"Stop dat fussin' an' fightin', you li'l niggers, an' look wid all yo' eyes; fur dar dey cum dis minit."

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Looking in the direction to which Uncle Ephraim pointed, there they were, sure enough,—the May-day procession coming down the long dusty road, the entire village having united in the festivities customary in the South for many years on the first day of May. The vehicles were decorated with gay ribbons and flowers and filled to overflowing with merry-hearted children (and grown-ups, too) who were bent upon a day of recreation and pleasure. In the center came the coach bearing the Queen of the May, with her maids of honor and a manly little page carrying her Majesty's train.

*Tramp, tramp,* sounded the hoofs of the patient horses as they bore their precious burdens up and down the village streets, and then turned into the grove of frolic and feasting for the rest of the day. The manly little page who attracted the attention of every one was Claude Southworth, whose mother had recently arrived in the South to visit friends. Claude's big blue eyes, golden fluffy hair, and happy disposition had won him many friends, among them Uncle Eph, who, not knowing Mrs. Southworth, had made Claude almost his daily companion. It was a never-to-be-forgotten scene, the air redolent with the perfume of spring flowers, the bright blue-and-white of the shifting clouds, the gay costumes of the crowd in the morning sunlight, the happy children followed by fond parents, and the little darkies bringing up the rear, stopping now and then to execute a "native breakdown."

"It was gorgeous," thought Uncle Eph, as he

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vanished from the sight of his family and started for the grove. More than one man thought it gorgeous, as he stood alone, lost in thought. Here he was one of them, and not one of them. Of what was he thinking as he watched the gay and happy crowd?

Under the trees the picnickers were busy moving about, getting things in readiness for the day's amusement, adjusting hammocks, swings, and games of every description. Uncle Eph was there, of course,—no one could think of getting along without him, from the boy who robs the orchard trees to the greatest dignitary of the village. At noon the long tables were spread with white cloths and filled from hampers and baskets with tempting viands to refresh the inner man. It was a sumptuous feast with plenty for all, and afterwards the remains of the "good things" were gathered together, and many a basket found its way to the homes of the poor.

No one noticed (as it was not an uncommon thing) when on this occasion, Uncle Eph took Claude with him on a tour of investigation, showing him everything of interest to his boyish heart. They hunted birds' eggs, fished awhile, and gathered wild flowers until, at length growing tired, Claude threw himself under the shade of a sycamore and insisted that Uncle Eph should tell him a story.

"Chile, I dis'member er story, jes' now. Eph cain' have er new one fo'yo' eb'ry day; but ef yo' op'n dem big blue eyes wide, Uncle Eph gwine ter tell yo' 'bout er dream he had las' night."

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"Well, go on, Uncle Eph! But you don't believe in dreams, do you?"

"Wal, I dunno, honey. Sometimes dar's sumthin' pow'ful strange 'bout 'em dat no one kno's nuthin' 'bout. Anyhow, I jest' dreamed de quar'st dream 'bout my ole Miss en Marster, en ob de gre't w'ite throne, en de angels, 'roun hit, en dey sed; 'Eph, cum up hyar; dey's all er waitin' fo' you.' Den de w'ite cloud op'n, en I seed Marse Edward,—meh li'l missus Miss Linnie's husban',—an' he say so nachel lak: 'Eph, whar's yo' Miss Linnie' an' den—'

"Oh, Uncle Eph," interrupted Claude, "that's my mother's name."

"Wal, honey chile, ef it iz, she's sho'ly got de putties' name in all de wurl'. 'Bout dat time I woke up, en dese ole bones hed ter go ter wuk; but dat dream, honey, made my heart moughty heaby."

The shade of evening was falling over the grove, the trees were nodding good-night, and the wild flowers had gone to sleep before the happy crowd started for home. On the cool, crisp air came the shrill voice of Mrs. Cole, chairman of arrangements.

"Eph, O Eph, do come and help get things ready. We are leaving now."

"Yessum, Mis Cole, I'se cumin' 'rectly," he answered. Then, turning to the child, he said:

"Honey chile, yo' stay hyer en wait fo' Uncle Eph. Doan go too far erway, ca'se I' gwine ter cum back fo' you an' take you home."

He had not been gone long, it seemed, when a piercing shriek rent the Heavens:

"Help! Help! Child in the well, child in the well."

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"'Fore Gawd," cried Ephraim, leaving everything and running to where the crowd was gathering. "Spose it be dat li'l Claude. I tol' him ter stay dar, but he nuver kin keep still."

Just as he reached the assembled group he heard that fearful cry again. Breaking through the people, for a moment Eph stood as if rooted to the spot; then, without hesitation, he pulled off his coat, and by means of a rickety ladder some one had brought out for the day, he descended into the well. On the water he saw the golden curls of little Claude. He called for a rope, which was quickly thrown to him; but before he could reach the child he had sunk from view to rise to the surface a second time and go down again. Eph's heart stood still as the child arose for the third time. God!—if he should miss him now! But the third time was the charm, he threw the rope about the little body and brought the boy safely to the top of the well, where many loving hands were ready to receive him. After his supreme effort, exhaustion seized Uncle Eph, he struck against the edge of the well, and would have been drowned had not some one come to his rescue.

The suspense was dreadful, for little Claude was apparently dead. But the group surrounding him continued working hard to save his life. The usual treatment was given: rolling, slapping, and rubbing, then a stimulant, and from the little blue lips at last there came a faint moan, then a cry: "Mamma! Mamma!" And those about him knew that he would live. So great was the joy in having him restored to them,—which seemed a miracle,—that the rescuer

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was forgotten. Uncle Eph quietly stole away unnoticed.

A few days later, after Claude had recovered, he thought of his old friend, and missing his jolly black face, said to his mother:

"Uncle Eph's been so good to me, Mamma. He took Claude out of the deep, deep well. The ladies and the men rubbed and rubbed me,—they worked so hard, and slapped and spanked so much they hurt; but Uncle Eph, he saved my life, and I'm going to bring him to you, Mamma."

And Claude started for Uncle Eph's home under the oaks.

Timidly he rapped upon the door. No answer came, and so great was the stillness that the little fellow was about to run away, when the door slowly opened disclosing to view Aunt Dilsie's sad face.

"Howdy, honey; dis am de chile, sho' nuf, dat wuz mos' drown'd. Cum in an' see Uncle Eph. He jes' ta'ks 'bout yo' all de time."

She held out her arms and brought Claude into the cabin, where, on his homely bed, lay Uncle Eph, tossing and moaning in pain. She seated Claude,—his big blue eyes wonderingly distressed, yet fearing to ask questions,—close beside the sick-bed, where she left him, awed and stricken at the sight of Uncle Eph's suffering. Soon a much louder and firmer rap was heard, and Aunt Dilsie returned to the door to admit a stranger, who asked if he might reward an act of bravery.

"I heard," said he, "of your husband's saving the life of a little boy the day I arrived here. The

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South was my home before the war, and I was deeply interested in the procession, which recalled so many pleasant memories. During the evening I was told of Uncle Eph's noble act, and I have come to do what I can for him."

"Oh, sah, I'se sho' glad ter see you. Eph's been moughty porely sence de accidint, tho' he ain' worrit much. He jus' keeps er ta'kin' 'bout de li'l one an' his li'l missus, en I'se 'fear'd it's gwine hard wid him. Cum in, sah, an' make yo'se'f at home."

The stranger accepted the invitation, at the same time noticing the child by Ephraim's bed. Stroking Claude's hair, he asked:

"Is this little fellow with the pretty curls the boy your husband saved?"

"Yas, sah, de bery same; an' he's so fon' ob my ole man dat dey iz allus tergedder."

"How long has Ephraim been ill?"

"He cum'd home, sah, wid his wet cloes on, an' he worrit so much 'bout de boy dat he dun forgit ter take 'em off, den dey dried on him, an' he tuk er drefful cold, an' had er chill. Den de fever cum, an' he sez his haid iz mos' bustin' open, an' he tuk ter de bed, en he ain been up no mo'. He won' sen' fo' de doctor, sezin' he ain much sick, nohow. But bein' ez he's out'n his haid, somus I beliebe hits bes' ter sen' fo' him enyhown."

Watching Ephraim closely, the stranger thought it too late to do much good, though he did not alarm Aunt Dilsie, but immediately sent for a physician who on his arrival confirmed his opinion

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that Uncle Eph was on the border of the great beyond.

Gently the stranger aided Aunt Dilsie in making the old man comfortable. The room was darkened and quiet. Only stifled sobs from Dode and Sambo were heard as they sat, dull-eyed and sad, in the corner, while Mammy's eyes, heavy with an unknown sorrow, were intently fixed on Ephraim's face. He seemed resting so easily that they dared not move lest they disturb him, when suddenly he opened his eyes, staring vacantly before him, as if seeing something invisible to the others.

At that moment there was a slight movement at the door,—the handle turned, and a slender figure, with a light shawl thrown about her head and shoulders, quietly entered. Her face was partly concealed, and the light so dim that she was scarcely observed. Looking toward the stranger, Uncle Eph's lips slowly parted, and distinctly they heard his whispered words:

“See 'em dar,—Marse Reed Jones, en—en Ole Miss, an' de angels 'roun' de w'ite throne. But whar's Miss Linnie?”

With these words the silent figure came nearer, eyes dilated with wonder, form trembling with suppressed excitement.

She had come for her boy. She knew where he was to be found. But what was this she heard? Her own name, her father's, her mother's, uttered! Nearer and nearer she came: the old woman, the old man on the bed, her own child so near him, the very air itself, brought precious memories of the past.

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The room seemed whirling around as she listened like one in a dream:

"Dem ole days in Virginny whin y'ung Marse Edward wen'ter de wah,—but dey'll nuver cum back ter Eph no mo'."

The old man had scarcely ceased speaking when the stranger started to his feet, and bending low over Ephraim, said:

"Tell me quickly, Eph, ere it be too late. Where is Miss Linnie?"

His eyes at the same time were watching the silent woman. There was something familiar in her movement. He turned up the light of the smoky oil lamp, and as the two looked into each other's eyes, there was a startled cry:

"Edward, oh, Edward, has the grave given up its dead?"

Before the man could reply, she noticed a change in Uncle Eph's expression, and putting her finger to her lips, whispered:

"Hush, in the presence of death we must control our joy and listen."

Uncle Eph seemed to understand. Raising himself halfway in the bed, almost inaudibly he said:

"Sho', it's Marse Edward, an' Miss Linnie! I'se gwine home now. An' li'l Claude, deir own chile! I'se dun foun' 'em at las'." Reaching out he took Marse Edward's hand, now a stranger no longer, and placed it in that of Claude's mother.

"I'se er cumin', ole Marster, I'se riddy an' willin' ter go. Good-bye, Miss Linnie,—Marse Ed,—Mam-

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my, an'—an' all. I'll meet yo' bimebye. Whar's I, enyhow,—down in Virginny?"

With a smile not of this earth, his spirit took its flight to the God who gave, while husband and wife, who had each believed the other dead, were reunited.

# THE LITTLE REBEL OF NORTHINGTON MANOR

"'Fore Gawd, Miss 'Stelle, I jes' foun' er sojer bleedin' ter death."

"No, Pete, not that!" exclaimed Estelle Northington, a Southern belle of sweet sixteen, as she sent Pete to the house for help. Then she ran to the place indicated, where, sure enough, was a Confederate soldier staining with his life-blood the ground on which he lay. Quickly tearing a strip from her white underskirt, she bandaged his wound as best she could and then waited until John and Ebenezer appeared with a litter, followed by Pete with restoratives.

When the soldier had somewhat revived, they bore him to the house and laid him in the high teester bed in "Ole Miss's room," which had remained closed since her death.

Estelle was a capricious little beauty with eyes as blue as the sky and hair like spun gold, who lived with her maiden Aunt in the manor, a fine old colonial home bequeathed to her by her father. She was sole heiress to its many rich acres and full quota of slaves, who worshipped the ground on which she trod. She was on her way to the "quarters" when Pete told her of the accident:

"Dat raskilly hoss kep'er whinin' jes' lak he had de sense ob w'ite fo'ks. He wuz actin' so quar dat

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I kno' sumthin' wuz wrong wid de pesky animule in his innards, or he'd dun gone clar stark mad. So I wen' mozin' 'long de groun' till I cum ter de mulberry tree, whar de yallerhammer iz buildin' his nes', an' dar I foun' him, whar dey lef' him for daid, I reckon."

With the help of Aunt Jane, Mammy Chloe, and her "ole man" Ebenezer, Estelle's guest was soon convalescent, and able to be propped up in bed among his pillows. One morning when the sunlight was making little patches of color over the deftly-woven rugs, bed draperies, and soft sheen of the maiden's hair, the soldier laughed, and a mischievous gleam came into his dark brown eyes:

"Miss Northington, you ought to remember me? I am Andrew Benton, son of your father's old friend, Major Benton. I met you once—when you were a little girl—"

"Yes, I felt sure that I knew you. During your illness I tried to remember; but when you laughed, it came to me, and instantly I recalled the dear old home, where father took me on a visit when I was six years old. I met a boy there older than myself with whom I played very happily. One day we played the game 'getting married.' I was dressed in white homespun, stiff with ruffles from the hem to the waist, and a little white bonnet over which was pinned a long white veil. The boy was dressed in his 'Sunday best', with a huge bouquet in one hand, while with the other he placed a tiny gold ring on my finger. Another boy friend acted the

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part of the minister, and pronounced us man and wife, and—”

“And now, during these awful times,” he interrupted, “man and wife have been reunited.”

He laughed again gayly when Estelle brought him the ring, which he recognized. They talked together until Aunt Jane, precise and prim,—whose effort in life was to keep her young niece within the confines of maidenly prudence,—admonished her sternly over her spectacles: “Estelle, Mr. Benton is still an invalid, and must not overdo.”

“But to think that little girl was you!”

“And you the little boy! And after all these years!”

These two, happy in their reunion, had forgotten there was such a thing as war, when through the house came a sudden cry:

“De Yanks iz comin’! I clar ter goodnuss dey iz, Miss ’Stelle.”

And Pete, who kept a faithful lookout for the enemy, ran headlong into the room.

From the window Estelle saw her country’s enemies coming up the dusty road, and when they reached the “big white house” nestling among the oaks, they entered the grounds. Benton, realizing his danger, called her to him:

“Miss Northington,—I’ve known you so long—can’t I say Miss Estelle?—before my capture, which is inevitable, I want to thank you for saving my life, and for all yours and Miss Jane’s kindness. But you cannot protect me longer without danger to yourself.”

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"Hush! They shall not take you from this house."

And there was a flash from blue eyes, which snapped like coals of fire. "Just follow my instructions, Mr. Benton, and leave the enemy to me." The man wondered what so small and so young a girl as she could do against a lot of blue-coats bent upon invading her home, but he was awed by her quaint dignity, as she again bade him to be quiet, and the graceful poise of her fluffy blonde head, as she turned to Aunt Jane, who was dazed and helpless, her spectacles on the edge of her nose, and not a little mystified as to what her madcap niece intended to do. Estelle did not keep her long in doubt.

"Go at once, Aunt Jane," she said, "and bring me your largest and best nightgown and nightcap."

But that lady stood as if frozen to the spot; and Estelle, shaking her by the shoulder, repeated the request:

"Hurry Aunt Jane, there is no time to lose."

With all her anxiety Aunt Jane had unusual confidence in Estelle, and had long laid the honors of the house on her young shoulders, so she hurried away to do Estelle's bidding. When she returned with the desired articles, she was again horror-stricken to hear the "little general" giving orders to Ebenezer, to make Marse Benton look as much like a woman as possible. Then she and Miss Jane left the room to give directions to the servants, and when they again saw Benton, they held their breaths in astonishment at the results accomplished.

Fortunately Ebenezer had kept the young man

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regularly shaved; and his face, therefore, was as smooth as a woman's; the dark-brown hair had been lightly touched with powder, delicate lines traced about the eyes and mouth, and when the nightcap was carefully adjusted, the transformation was wonderful. The stage was set, and ready for the play:

"Remember," said Estelle, quickly assuming her part, "there are only three women on this place. Mr. Benton, from this moment you are Aunt Emily. And you, Aunt Jane, must be reading to Aunt Emily when the Yankees enter the room."

To Lindy, her own maid, she said:

"Lindy."

"Yaas, 'm."

"You understand,—there are only three women?"

"Yaas, 'm."

"And you will hold your tongue?"

"Yaas, 'm."

Turning, Estelle gave a parting shot to Benton:

"Please, Aunt Emily, don't forget you are an invalid, and do behave as much like a woman as you can."

This was almost too much for the young man; but increasing interest in her prevented him from rebelling outright. Her daring spirit caught his fancy, and he vowed to act his part whether it meant life or death for him. In his heart was little hope of her success, but, clad in nightgown and ruffled nightcap, he was smiling in spite of himself, as he intently watched Estelle, who was calmly awaiting the soldiers, now almost at the door.

The young girl took a long look about the

## THE HANDKERCHIEF AND THE SWORD

room. Everything seemed in readiness, when her eyes fell upon Benton's sword, which she in her haste had forgotten. Footsteps were rapidly approaching; voices were coming nearer; hide that sword she must. Lifting her dress, she belted it in at her waist, with the tip just reaching the edge of the skirt. Then she went downstairs to meet the Federal soldiers:

To the nearest man,—a big manly fellow, she said: “I—I suppose you are hungry?” knowing the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

He laughed heartily as he replied:

“I guess, miss, my men can put away all you can give them,—they've already had a look at your barns and stable, and by jiminy! you've got the finest lot of horses in the land. But what we are more particular about is a reb supposed to be in hiding in this house.”

The blue eyes were blazing:

“A reb is not a coward, sir. If he were, he would not be here. Come and see for yourself. There are only three women on this place; and surely you would not molest three lone women?”

Something in the words and quaint dignity of such a little woman, just big enough to pass under the arm of a medium-sized man, made the officer pause. But quickly changing her tone, Estelle smiled sweetly, as she innocently continued:

“I don't know you, sir, but I suppose that you are in charge of these men. Will you bring them into the dining-room for refreshments, before you go over the house?”

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Her fearless composure caused the soldier to gaze at her in evident admiration, and before he realized what he was doing, he had ordered a bunch of men outside to guard the house, then, with the rest, followed her into the dining-room,—with its high ceilings, dainty blue and rich old china, and glassware (the silver had been hidden),—where Mammy Chloe waited for them with a feast fit for a king. John, spotless in his white apron, made his contribution, of which he was a connoisseur, in the form of a large bowl of the sparkling beverage that cheers and also intoxicates.

The men ate and drank to their heart's content,—many of them, indeed, drank a drop too much, but the young officer kept his head. When they had finished, he had just had enough to put him in a good humor. Rising from his chair and lifting his glass, he gave a toast to Estelle, which they all drank, then, bowing awkwardly, he picked a few of his men and started on the tour of investigation. With firm step and head erect, Estelle led them through the house, the lower floor first. Close at her heels the men peered into closets, pantries, and into every nook and corner. Then, up the stairs they climbed. At the first broad landing she heard the scraping of the sword. What if they should hear? She held her breath, but the men had heard or seen nothing save the beautiful girl leading them to a victory all her own.

Through the bedrooms they filed until they came to Benton's. Estelle leaned for a second against the door for support. The moment had come for

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the supreme test. It was win or lose, and with a mighty effort she controlled her voice as she pointed to the bed:

"The—the lady in bed is my Aunt Emily. She is an invalid." The fairness of Benton's features, the powdered gray hair curling below the ruffles of the nightcap, and the expression he assumed made him look the part of a sick woman.

"The one reading to her is Aunt Jane. You have been everywhere but in the linen press, and the cedar chest. You can go there—if you wish—and—and look under the bed, but you will find only three women as I told you—"

"And one of them is far too pretty to remain a maiden very long," gallantly interrupted the young officer.

He looked too long into eyes that fearlessly met his, hesitated, and was lost. Making a sweeping bow to the ladies, he turned to Estelle:

"I am satisfied that we shall not find our man here. I am Lieutenant Ferguson, and your name?"

"Is Estelle Northington, sir."

Lieutenant Ferguson bade his men begone, and again thanking Estelle, left the house, without so much as laying a finger on anything the plantation contained. Reaching a turn in the road, he looked back and seeing the young girl at the window, smiled and bowed again.

Shortly after Benton's miraculous escape he was strong enough to rejoin his regiment, but not before he had found the one woman in the world for him. She was reading aloud his favorite poem

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from Tennyson. Her voice was well modulated and pleasing, he was listening entranced, when he realized the hour had come when they must separate,—he to go back to a life of danger but of action as well, she to wait and hope alone. He put out his hand and closed the book. Estelle looked up and read the question in his eyes, then lowered hers:

“Estelle, the time has come when I must go. You will be true to me until I return?”

“Yes.”

“And if I should be killed—”

“If you give your life for your country, Andrew,—I will be true to you after death.”

“Oh, dear heart, that is too much to ask; but something tells me I shall live to claim my bride, the bravest little woman in all the world.”

Occasionally messages came to Estelle from Benton; but they were few and far between. In one she learned that for valiant and efficient service he had been promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Every day seemed a year away from Andrew, and Estelle was becoming restless and anxious,—fretting herself into a nervous wreck because she was not a man that she might fight for the dear old South. Oh, it was so hard to endure the suspense of inaction, without the sensation of excitement to uphold and sustain her.

Aunt Jane rebuked her, reminding her that her duty was at home; but ever before Estelle came a figure of the man she loved best on earth, standing before the guns to be shot down,—and if he fell, it would be he and not she. And what would life be

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without him? When she had helped Aunt Jane tie the last package that would go on the morrow to the boys in gray, she went quietly to her own room and drew the green blinds, shutting out the glare of sunshine that fell over hill and valley, and there she saw Mammy Chloe below watching her window. Estelle had left word that no one should come to her. She was fighting a battle with herself and wanted to be alone.

"Oh, mah sweet chile," bewailed Chloe. "I wunder whut ails her? Sumthin's wrong whin her shet her doo' on her ole Mammy whuts nuss'd her eber sence her wuz bohn'd."

Her keen black eyes were full of love and anxiety as she watched and waited throughout the long day, and when the sun sank below the western horizon, bathing the devastated land in a glow of golden-red, she was rewarded by Estelle's coming slowly toward her. The young girl wore a dark coat with a cape, which completely covered her, but when she gained Mammy Chloe's side the coat opened and disclosed to view a uniform of gray:

"Mah Gawd, Miss 'Stelle! Whut make you look lak dat? An' whar you gwine in dem cloes, enyhow?"

Estelle's eyes fell before Mammy's gaze, but she replied unflinchingly:

"To the army, Mammy."

Had a cannon-ball burst over Chloe's head, she could not have been more astonished.

"Ter de army? You mus' be out 'n yo' haid. You iz on'y er 'ooman; you cain' fight."

## THE LITTLE REBEL

"That's the worst of it, Mammy. The mothers of men cannot fight,—they only must suffer and endure, but there are more ways of serving, Mammy, than by fighting. My very soul is with Andrew and my suffering country. If I remain here, I will go mad, and if I go,—and they do not find I am a girl,—perhaps I can serve and fight, too. But Mammy, take care of Aunt Jane and everything after I'm gone. Promise, Mammy?"

"Oh, go 'long wid yo'! De idee ob you gwine ter de wah, whin you ain' nuver had yo' li'l w'ite han's ter nuthin'. Ain' I dun promis' yo' mudder de night her died, an' I helt yo' in my ole black arms, ter keer fo' you an' watch whuts yo's ez long ez I lib'd?"

The plantation lay brown and lifeless with ruin stamped upon everything, while not many leagues away the rain of shot and shell was heard in that once peaceful valley. So wooded and uneven was the country, and the enemies so close at hand, that one knew unless he could find the other before reënforcements reached them, the victory was doubtful. All day the battle raged fiercely. So terrific was the fighting that men fought hand to hand with the bayonet, and great holes were torn into the earth as men went down like sheaves of wheat, and brothers fell side by side. At nightfall the firing lessened, then ceased altogether. In the rear of the Southern army through the deepening gloom of mist and bloodshed, a little woman made her way, comfort in her words, healing in her touch. She listened to the piteous cry of "Water! Water! Water!" on

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all sides, and held the life-giving draught to severed and dying lips. One poor fellow, moaning with pain, put out his hand and touched her:

"For God's sake, give me water, boy!" he cried.

Looking closer, Estelle saw that he was a boy in blue among the gray, but she refilled her canteen and held it to his lips as she had done to those in gray. He drank long and eagerly, then looked into her eyes with a grateful smile:

"Who are you? You look like some one—"

"Who?" she whispered.

"A face at the window I can never forget. I can close my eyes and see the light on her hair and eyes—"

"Her name?" she cried.

"Estelle,—Estelle Northington."

"Hush! I am she! And you were kinder than you knew to me."

Rallying, the officer again fixed his eyes upon her and said more to himself than to her:

"It's strange,—but a reb was wounded in the last squirmish. I could have killed him, but somehow I made him my prisoner; and in his ravings from fever he called for Estelle—Estelle—"

With a low cry the girl bent over the speaker and wiped the death moisture from his brow:

"I know—" he continued with effort, "you—you loved him?"

"Yes."

"In my pocket is a card with the name of my brother, Dr. Ferguson, in charge of the Federal

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hospital. Go to him and tell him you gave me water,—your enemy,—and that I—I love—”

The last word was never uttered, but with a woman's unerring instinct, Estelle knew the secret of that dead heart as she tenderly closed the soldier's eyes and laid him back on the cold, hard ground.

Over all nature hung the funeral pall of war! To the dreary gloom and groans of the dying and wounded was added a misty drizzling rain, but this did not move the girl. She must go at once, if she would reach Andrew Benton in time. But what surely had she that it was her Andrew Benton? there were others by that name as well. But Lieutenant Ferguson said he had called for Estelle, and she could not reason otherwise than that it was he lying in the hospital and needing her.

The way was dangerous, and the night dark; not a star shone to guide the girl, as she plodded wearily on over the rough ground, dodging a sentry here and there, lying prone at times to gather strength, starting at the slightest sound, her brain on fire, lest she be too late.

Her worn body shivered from the touch of damp clothes as she pressed silently on over bodies of men who had fallen like leaves before the winter's blast. With aching limbs possessing strength undreamed of, she went flying until suddenly campfires loomed before her, and a rifle was thrust in her face. Her arms were pinioned from behind, and out of the darkness and commotion came the command:

“Halt!”

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Then she was dragged to a tent before which stood an officer. The trees swayed in the sighing wind, and the gloom closed over the narrow path, as the guard approached with his captive.

"Who comes here?" said the officer.

"Capt'n, we've got a boy spy."

"I'm not a spy," cried Estelle. "I wish to speak to Dr. Ferguson."

The officer motioned the men to unbind their prisoner's hands. From out the woods there was a sudden burst of light, which not only revealed the dark blood-spots on earth and foliage, but the features of Conrad Ferguson, standing near. Hearing his name, he came quickly forward.

"I am Dr. Ferguson," he announced.

"Oh, sir, I have passed your pickets, have fought my way through your lines, unmindful of bullets, to hand you a message from your brother."

"My brother?"

"Yes, Lieutenant Ferguson."

Dr. Ferguson led Estelle to one side, and unfalteringly she told him her story. Not an eyelash quivered as she returned his searching gaze. Her courage moved him, as it had his brother, to a strange emotion.

"My brother is dead?"

"Yes."

His hand closed over hers, and a convulsion of pain passed over his strong, mobile face. He was about to write an order, Estelle remembered, then she knew nothing more. When she came to herself she

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was lying on a cot in a tent, and heard, as if in a dream, muffled voices:

"Ferguson, you need not say more. You know that fellow is a spy."

"We can prove that later on."

"Have you searched him?"

"No, he is too sick to be disturbed now. There is plenty of time when he comes to his senses."

When the men were gone Estelle opened her eyes and narrowly looked about her. She was alone, except for the doctor, who stood and looked at her thoughtfully. Drawing nearer, in a deep low voice, he said:

"You have confidence in me, but they will discover your sex, and you will be shot as a spy unless something is done quickly. Have you anything hidden on your person?"

"No. As I told you, Dr. Ferguson, I am seeking Andrew Benton."

"Benton,—Benton. Oh, yes; I remember a fellow by that name. He was slightly wounded, and is now able to leave."

"Oh, sir, can I see him?"

Into the doctor's eyes, so like his brother's, came a softened, thoughtful look, which merged into one of real inspiration.

"Perhaps; but it is dangerous. Stay here and speak to no one until I see you again."

The next moment he was gone, and Estelle was alone, wondering if it could really be her Andrew well and safe after that day's terrible battle.

The armies were sleeping on their arms, dreaming

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of home and those they had left behind,—wife, mother, and sweetheart, and little did Andrew Benton dream that his sweetheart was alone in that vast multitude of men, who would be slaughtering one another on the morrow.

Out in the deadly stillness,—the lull before the storm,—even the sentry seemed off his guard. Perhaps he, too, was dreaming of home and loved ones while on duty among the living and the dead. The password was twice given him before Dr. Ferguson could make his way back to Estelle.

He shook her softly as he handed her a bundle, telling her to dress quickly. She moved mechanically, like one in a dream, but did as he bade her, fearing she was going to meet death instead of her lover. She followed him outside, across the field to an outlying tent. In passing a camp-fire, the light flashed across their path, and the glow caught a brass button, revealing to Estelle the Federal uniform she wore. But she asked no questions. When they reached the tent a gust of wind blew the flap aside, and he turned to her:

“At the end of the long row is Andrew Benton. I will go alone and prepare him for the meeting. If he is the man you are seeking, he will not recognize you in this uniform. Remember your identity is a secret. No word between you must disclose it. A young fellow about your size died to-night in the sick ward,—he will be buried in your Confederate uniform. To-morrow you and Andrew Benton will be safely through the lines.”

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Estelle caught Dr. Ferguson's hand and pressed it to her lips.

"How can I ever thank you?"

"I've done nothing but what my brother would wish me to do."

Then he went within the tent and Estelle was alone again, until he beckoned her to come inside. With as much self-control as she could assume, although her heart was beating as if it would break, she went forward, and a cry sprang to her lips as Benton held out his hands to her. But she thought of her friend's words and guarded herself.

Even when her lover whispered with raptured eagerness: "Estelle! Estelle!" she, the bravest of little Southern patriots, was master of the situation.

## THE TRIUMPH OF MAHALY ANN

"Ain' he han'sum?"

"Yer doan sez so!"

"He's gwine ter eat his vittels off'n my she'f."

"Yer doan sez so!!"

Belle's eyes narrowed with jealousy, as Susan Jane's thick red lips smilingly continued:

"Hit's de Gawd's truf, Belle; an' you jes' nacherly watch me take de shine off'n you."

"You? Humph!" Belle almost swallowed the mouthful of sweet gum she was chewing. "You see dat gal in her baptism dress on de aidge ob de congregashun? Wal, her wuz wid de hardshells near Walters' plantation, whin he wuz holdin' 'trasted meet'n, an' all de niggers down thar got 'ligion. An' I reckon dat 'lows fo'de circumspec'ion ob de fact dat her's heah, wid her big black eyes set on de parson—"

"Shet up, Belle! Ev'rybudy kno's yo' expectera'ions, but you, an' dat prinky gal must ricompense yo'se'f ter de understandin' dat me,—Susan Jane Brown,—has de fust claim on bein' Mrs. Dr. Johnsing."

"You iz moughty bigity 'bout yo'se'f,—yas yo' iz; but we's gwine ter see who's gwine ter kotch dat nigger," declared Belle, as she sprang after Susan Jane, ready to scratch her eyes out on the spot.

It was a mellow Southern day. Not a hitch in

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either the weather or the arrangements for an ideal time for the negroes, who were as happy as children on a long-expected holiday. Fleecy clouds chased one another over the azure of a perfect sky, as the negroes, some on foot, others in wagons hitched to mules, started on their way to the annual baptism. Also went with them hampers of good things to eat, which only the old-time darkey knew how to make.

Softly Southern winds blew through leafy lanes, and the mocking-bird almost split his throat with his sweetest songs; but around Aunt Victoria's cabin was music of a far different kind. That highly indignant person was running, puffing for breath, helter skelter, through the grounds and even up to the "big house" of the McDonalds, enquiring for Mahaly Ann, her main reliance in a family of twelve.

Mahaly Ann, daughter of Aunt Victoria, had long been a familiar figure on the streets of the river town. Since childhood she had peddled her wares,—lye-hominy, which "ole Miss" teach'd her mammy ter make befo' her wuz bohned. She had grown to young womanhood, but still went in with her bucket filled to the brim, to sell her "huminy ter de w'ite fo'ks" regularly once a week. But this was Sunday and Aunt Victoria knew that Mahaly Ann had not gone to town. Furthermore, she had been suspicious ever since "Dr. Johnsing" had held forth in the neighborhood, and been too ardent an admirer of Mahaly Ann's charms.

As the negroes gathered for the baptism Aunt Vic laid aside her red bandanna and blue checked homespun dress, and decked herself in one of white

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cotton, tied about the waist a black sash "Ole Miss" had given her, which made her look like a cotton bale tied in the middle, and took her stand in the road, asking of the negroes as they passed:

"Has you see'd anythin' ob dat onruly gal, Mahaly Ann?"

None knew of her whereabouts, or, if they did, they refused to let Aunt Vic into the secret. When she caught sight of her old friend and neighbor, Melissa Walters, whom she knew was even a greater friend to her daughter, she demanded:

"Now, Melissy, I'se boun' you kno' whar Mahaly Ann iz?"

Melissa, who had purposely passed that way, hesitated a moment, then replied:

"Whut fo' you ax me, Vic? You ough'er kno' yo' own chile has been cunvert'd."

"Cun—cun,—whut?"

"'Ligion, Vic, 'ligion. Her's at las' dun got hit, an' her's jes' gwine ter de baptized, dat's all. Dat sho' ough' er make yo' happy, Vic, ef you ain', I iz,—an' whut's more, I'se gwine ter stan' by her through thick an' thin."

"Happy, Melissy! Iz you crazy? Doan yo' kno' dat triflin' no count nigger? Wal, I does. An' thank Gawd, Vic doan take no stock in him, no how! Min'ster, he call hisse'f!" Aunt Victoria's chocolate-colored features accentuated by a large flat nose, took on a look of supreme contempt. Feeling that she was gaining an audience, as the negroes by twos and threes eager for a fray between Aunt

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Vic and Melissa surrounded her, she continued emphatically:

"No matter whut you, Melissy, nur de rest ob you-all niggers say. Me, Victoria McDonald, kno's dat pusionage. He's moughthy mystifyin' wid de wimmin ob de Chu'ch. It's his fasernatin' way, dey say, whut makes 'em give the cloes off'n deir backs, an' de last cent dey got in de wurl', ter say nuthin' ob feedin' him lak he wuz de gre'test man in the yearth. 'Ligion, Melissy! Her got more ob dat nigger in her kinkly haid den 'ligion any day. Yer may be on yo' way ter de baptism, ef yo' likes, but whin yo' gits dar jes' send Mahaly Ann back fo' de beatin' she's sho' gwine ter git."

Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like Mahaly Ann, the colored belle of that section of the cotton belt, when by a circuitous route she had arrived in time for the baptism. That morning, while her mammy was on the warpath, she had slipped across the fields to Melissa, where that good soul had decked her out in her baptismal robe, which she had made with her own hands, and which was more like a wedding gown than one in which to go into the cold water. It was bountifully trimmed with a cheap cotton lace, and a big white bow of cheaper ribbon was fastened at her slender waist. On her head she had put a poor excuse for orange blossoms in the shape of a wreath of small yellow flowers, which, before she was called for, she would take off and hand to Aunt Melissy. On the bank not far away was an old deserted shack where the "converts"

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would go to change their baptismal "white" for dry garments.

Under the wreath of blossoms Mahaly Ann's eyes shone like coals of fire, and her red full lips parted in a broad smile that showed her large white teeth, like rows of pearls, as she watched Susan Jane and Belle edging their way nearer the parson, who came slowly out from the crowd and walked toward the river. His ministerial black suit was much too large for his tall, angular body, while his stove-pipe hat, a gift from a "w'ite gen'l'man frien'," was as much too small for his big bullet head. He was one of those colored preachers of the old days in the South, who were simple-minded followers of the Gospel. Natural imitators as well as musicians, they followed in the footsteps of the "w'ite bretheren." They preached as they worked,—in the fields or wherever they felt "the call." Not educated nor ordained for the ministry, they sometimes gave interesting but amusing mixtures of the different doctrines, and whether they kept to the text or not, they were always reverent and full of religious spirit.

Dr. Johnson, who carried the name of the family to whom his father had belonged, was born and reared on the banks of the Mississippi. His people were Baptists, and he knew no other baptism save going "down under the water," until he had returned from a visit to his brother-in-law across the river, where he fell into the hands of a new doctrine, during which he witnessed the Presbyterian ceremonial, and quite egoistical of his added knowledge, was anxious that his flock should share it with him.

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His deep-toned voice, soothing to his hearers, came from the fullness of his heart:

"Bred'ren' an' sis'ren', I take my text from the Scripter whut p'ints ter de bu'nt offerin', whut gibs man dominion ober de wurl'. De beas' am un'er man whut comes ter dis heah yearth ter suffer, but who' gwine ter be saved ef he gwine down un'er de water, ter wash hisse'f w'iter den de snow. Ef yo' been wash'd an' made w'ite in de blood ob de Lamb, you gwine up yunder whar deirs no cullard fo'ks, ca'se ebrybudy's w'ite in de Heab'ly Mans'on whut no man's hand dun made. Dar's er place fo' ebrybudy, an' de walls iz kiver'd wid prec'ous stones, an' de streets paved wid gold, an' whut's more, milk an' honey iz jes' er flowin' 'till ebrybudy has deir fill an' mor'n dey kin tote erway.

"Sprinklin' iz justfyin' ter me, ef fo'ks believes hit! But me an' my fo'ks iz Baptists, an' I keeps ter de rules ob dat faith. But whin I doan do as I see dem, den I'm lak er sheep'shead in er pot ob dumplins,—I jes' keep er kickin' an' er bilin' 'till I knocks out all de dumplin'. Now you all iz gwine down in de water in de reg'lar way,—but I se gwine ter do somethin' er leetle differ'nt, scusin' of hit's bein' onbaptist, it am 'cordin' ter de Good Book, jes' de same. Now listen. Whin I calls you, be riddy wid yo' full baptizin' name." At this moment Mahaly Ann caught another look exchanged between Susan Jane and Belle, and her own face revealed an inspiration as the parson continued:

"Dis 'ligion ain' no foolishnuss. De Lawd wuks out debils whut run out'n man inter de hog, dat

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His Kingdom mought be 'stablish'd in de yearth.  
An' you kno' whut's gwine ter happen, ef you doan  
do de Marster's will. Yo' gwine fast ter de place  
whut's full of good intervent'ons, an'whar de hot  
lead iz bilin' fo' yo' miser'ble bodies. But belub'd  
Chrischuns, de Lamb ob Glory am gwine ter bring you  
thru de baptismal water, out'n de wildernuss ob sin  
inter de track ob salbat'on." Nearing the water's  
edge, he began in a sing-song measure:

"We's gwine ter cross de ribber Jordan,  
Doan yo' heah 'em singin' doan yo' heah 'em callin'?  
Yes, be ter Gawd we's on our way ter Glory,  
Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!"

Over and over again the words were sung, some pitched in one key, some in another, but all mingled in an outburst of song in which the "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah!" was wafted over the river in the musical intonation of the old-time negro. When all were full of religious zeal Dr. Johnson turned persuasively to Mahaly Ann:

"Come, sister, and be baptized in de Lawd?"

"Her'll nuver do dat!" And kinky-headed Susan Jane sprang out like a four-timer. "I wunder ef her 'zactly am ob de 'pinion dat her gwine ter beat me in dis-heah unertakin'. Lawdy, how her gwine ter be fool'd!"

And before the minister could recover himself she ran to him, shouting at the top of her voice;

"Hol' me, Brer' Ben, hol' me! Hol' me, Brer' Ben,  
hol' me! I doan wan' Brer' John ter hol' me, I  
wan' Brer Ben ter hol' me, ca'se I'se so happy I'm  
gwine ter de promus' land!"

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She quickly gave him her name, and with a despairing glance at Mahaly Ann, the parson put his arm resignedly about Susan Jane's slim waist, and mournfully called out:

"I baptize de Susan-Jane Arimathea Lucindy Brown, in de name ob de Fader, de Son, an' de Holy Ghos'. Amen."

There was a frightened gasp when Susan Jane went under the water, and a decided splutter when she arose in the arms of the Reverend Benjamin Johnson. A "sister" took her to the deserted cabin, where she soon exchanged her baptismal dress, and rejoined her friend, who was impatiently waiting her turn.

Aunt Melissa's eyes were on Belle whom she knew was eager to throw herself at Dr. "Johnsing's" feet, and not only outdo Susan Jane but Mahaly Ann as well. Nearing her charge, she quietly pressed her hand and whispered:

"Doan let dem hussys bother you, honey. Dey oughter be chu'ched! It's scan'lous de way dey run atter Dr. Johnsing, who won' wipe his foot on one ob 'em. 'Sides hit ain' doin' 'em no good, nohow, ca'se you hold de cyards, my chile."

Smiling with perfect confidence, Belle pushed forward and was ready for her name before it was asked for. Surely she had won the day as she arose from the cold stream and disappeared within the blanket, for she had been christened:

"Arabella Minerva 'Liza Jane Lucretia Mott Ann An'erson Matilda Morris."

The sun was going down behind the cypress trees,

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and the river shimmered in a golden haze, as Dr. Johnsing once more held out his hands to Mahaly Ann:

"Dar her cum now, dat high stepper!" declared Susan Jane. "Her looks lak her gwine ter kerry him off an' eat him, clo'es an' all. But her ain' ef de co't kno's hitse'f, an' hit t'inks hit does."

"An' dem w'ite wall'd eyes an' dat mouf o'hern," sneered Belle, who, like the others, was awaiting the last baptism, and the most interesting one of them all. "An' dem yaller flowers tied wid yaller ribbon, an' yaller lace. Lawdy, ef I cou'd git my hands on dem woolly kinks whut's twist'd lak spike tails, I'd spile 'em eb'ry one. Dat lye huminy gal wid sich migrat'ons!"

This was too much for Aunt Melissa, who had heard every word. Throwing up her head in disgust before Mahaly Ann could reach the preacher, she began singing in a high pitched voice:

"Dar's er Mans'on in de skies, dar's er Mans'on in de skies fo' me.

Roll on golden char'ot, roll on, roll on.

Whar I'se gwine ter wair dat stairry crown.

Roll on, golden chariot, roll on, roll on."

While the singing was in progress Mahaly Ann smiled as she thought of the trump card that lay in her hand, and also of the childhood name that "Ole Miss" had given to her,—as mistresses of "the big house" often did because their mammyies thought it would bring good luck to the little pickaninnies. The hour of Mahaly Ann's triumph had come. Her face beamed with the glow of something greater than her young life had ever known, while Dr. Johnson's shone with happiness as she whispered into his ear when

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they went into the water together. Placing one hand on her head, the other about her slender waist, the lovelight within his deep black eyes, he sang out in stentorian tones:

"I baptize de Han'sum Manthy McFirst Lydia Abagail Lutitia Annie Bouregard Miss Elizabeth Catherina Katie Fisher Bonny Turpentine Mahaly Ann Johnsing, in de name—"

But he got no further, there was a buzz of a hundred black bees.

"Johnsing! Johnsing! Lawd er massy! Whar did her git dat-all name?"

"Her's dun kotch'd Dr. Johnsing,—dat's all."

"Kotch him!" screamed Belle, "her's a'riddy had dat black coon, whut nobudy wants nohow."

And she and Susan Jane walked away in disgust.

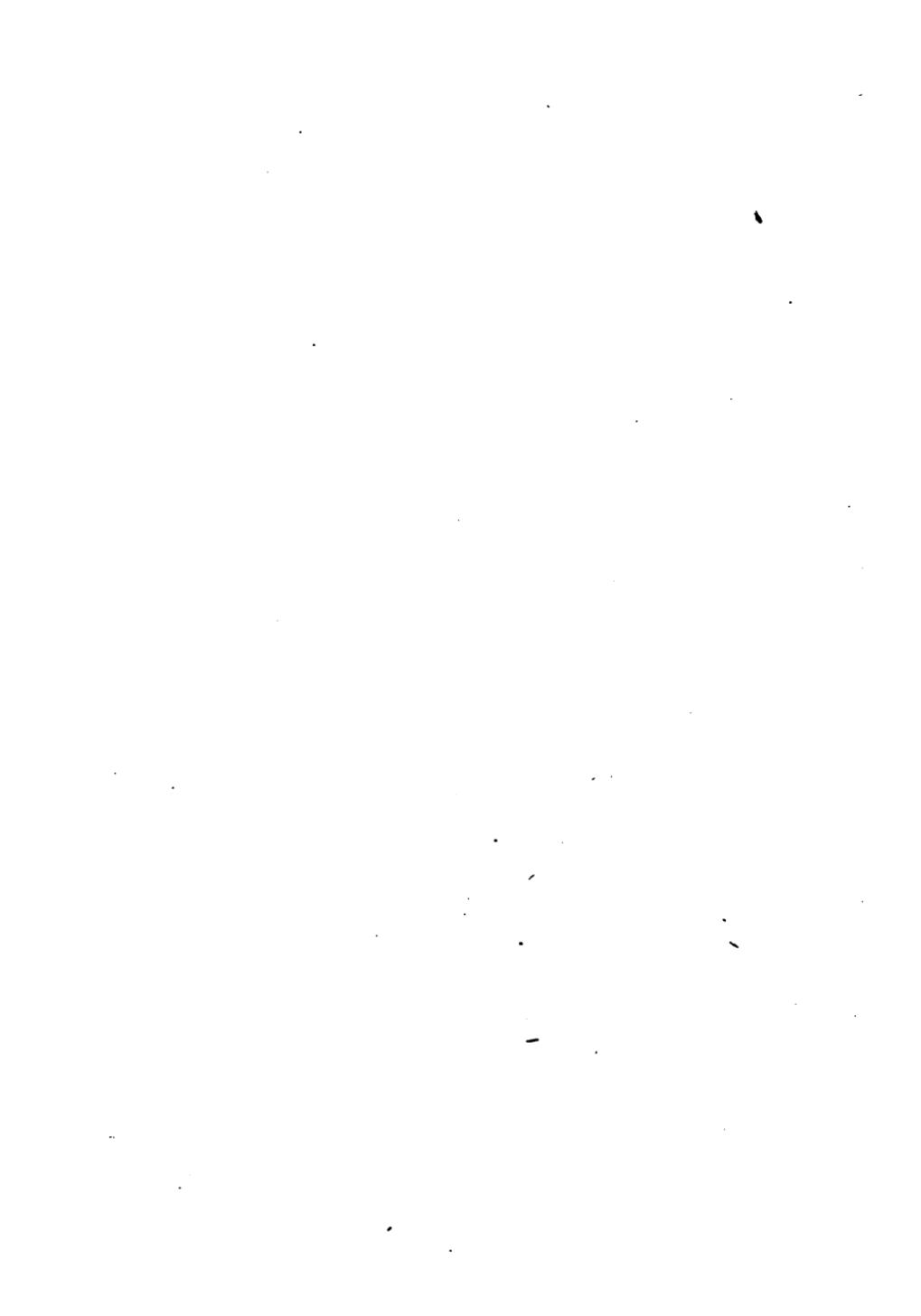
Down in the cabin that night when Melissa Walters dropped in to tell Aunt Vic the news, she reached for the hickory she usually applied to the pickaninnies, and vowed:

"Hit's all wrong, all wrong, Melissy! Ef I cou'd git my hands on dat Mahaly Ann dis minit, I'd gib her sich er beatin', dat wou'd make her disremember her baptism day ez long ez her lived."

Then, wiping her eyes with the corner of her old red bandanna, she moaned:

"Ole Miss mought er kno'd better den ter gib dat gal dat high falutin' outlandis' name, which dun gone an' made her wrick her happiness on de rock ob obstruct'on."





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